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ABSTRACT

This guide to family-directed transition planning is intended to help parents and students with disabilities take leading roles in the process of transition from school to post-school activities. First, a letter to families examines the challenge of change and the transition process. Section 2 examines regulations that affect transition planning, including those services mandated under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the School-to-Work Opportunities Act of 1994, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Section 3 considers parent participation on the transition team and a chart lists many other potential participants and their roles. This section urges individualized transition planning and the promotion of independence, self-advocacy, and self-determination. Section 4 is on organizing transition planning, noting the importance of a variety of assessments including situational, environmental, and vocational/career assessment. Section 5 is on community life, including setting goals, employment, a natural workplace supports quality checklist, postsecondary education, independent and supported living opportunities, transportation, mental health and counseling services, health care, and financial information. Section 6 offers guidance on contacting agencies and community resources. Section 7 offers one student's account of his transition experiences. The final section provides a glossary and appendix of sample forms and checklists. (DB)

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FAMILY-DIRECTED TRANSITION PLANNING GUIDE

Summer 2001

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Colorado Department of Education, Special Education Services Unit
And
JFK Partners
are pleased to announce

Family-Directed Transition Planning Guide

2001

This handbook, adapted for Colorado, includes information that will assist students with disabilities, and their parents, to prepare for transition to adult life. This guide should be used in conjunction with other transition planning and assessment materials.

Permission to copy is granted.

The complete document is available on the JFK Partners website at:
http://www.jfkpartners.org

And on the CDE website at:

http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/

Additional copies may be purchased for $8 each from:

JFK Partners by calling Edie Bridge at (303) 864-5266

For further information, please contact Wendy Ulibarri in the Special Education Services Unit at (303) 866-6799.

Preface to Colorado Edition of

FAMILY-DIRECTED TRANSITION PLANNING GUIDE

This version of the Family-Directed Transition Planning Guide was made possible because of the generosity of Southern Westchester BOCES and the Westchester Institute for Human Development in providing the original text of their manual and agreeing that the Colorado Department of Education and JFK Partners could modify it for use in Colorado. References to policies, procedures and resources have been changed where necessary to make this guide more useful for Colorado youth with disabilities and their families. We have also attempted to update this manual with relevant legislation passed since it was originally written. We want to express particular appreciation, also, to Edie Bridge for her unfailing good humor and commitment through the multiple revisions to producing this guide.

This manual is available in print for a cost of printing ($5.00) or it may be downloaded at www.jfkpartners.org.

We would appreciate your feedback and suggestions for improvement. Comments may be given to us by phone (Scott Steinbrecher 303-315-1274), in writing (Scott Steinbrecher, address below), or by email (scott.steinbrecher@uchsc.edu).

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Section 1

LETTER TO FAMILIES

from Barbara Gibbs Levitz, Director of the Family Resource Center (called The Family Connection) and Jacqueline T Fowler, Director of the Consumer Resource Center at the Westchester Institute for Human Development, a UCE (formally known as a UAP)

Unless otherwise indicated, all parent and consumer quotes are from
Forging a New Era 1990 Reports on People with Developmental Disabilities,
By Jaskulski, T., Metzler, C., and Zierman, S., May 1990
Published by National Association of Developmental Disabilities Council,
1234 Massachusetts Ave NW, Suite 103, Washington, DC 20005

SECTION 1: LETTER TO FAMILIES

Change challenges all of us

This *Family-Directed Transition Planning Guide* was prepared especially for families of students with disabilities by families who have already experienced the transition process. Change challenges all of us and transition from school to adult life is one of the most comprehensive changes that we face. It is not a singular event but rather a series of planning and activating events that can begin as early as age fourteen and which have no particular end date. During the school years, students with all types of disabilities are taught by teachers and other professionals who take the lead in developing curriculum and identifying supports that will educate students to their fullest potential and prepare them for the next steps. It is generally at some point during adolescence when most adolescents are typically struggling with issues of separation and independence-that families are expected to step back into the guiding or directing role. The purpose of this guidebook, as the title indicates, is to help you move into the driver's seat at the *beginning* of the transition planning process. There are several reasons for this. Families know themselves-their likes and dislikes, their strengths and limitations-better than anyone else. For the most part, family members are the constant in each other's lives, providing support and influencing choices throughout life. And, families have the greatest investment in the desired outcomes-in how things turn out.

Transition planning must start with the student and family

Family-directed planning means that both the student *and* parent(s) or guardian(s) are involved in the process. It may include other family members as well as other significant people in the family's life. Transition planning needs to start with families and to do this, it would be helpful for families to understand what's involved and to have an overview of this planning process. This guidebook is intended to be used as a way to begin to discuss transition and to help families work through this process together with school personnel and other professionals.

Students with various disabilities are included

Not all the information included in this guidebook pertains to every type of disability-physical, emotional, learning, developmental, or behavioral. Information related to students with different types of disabilities is included because there are often dual issues, such as developmental and behavioral, that do not fit neatly into any one service but require some collaboration on the part of a number of people. Also, not every student will be able to participate in the transition process to the same degree and some may need assistance in communicating their thoughts and ideas. It is helpful to address these types of challenges so that all students are included to the greatest extent possible.

Using this guidebook

Not all sections of this guidebook will be relevant at the same time. For example, in section 5 you will find information on Independent and Supported Living Opportunities which may be more appropriately addressed as one approaches young adulthood rather than at age fourteen. However, since, at some point, moving out is part of every student's transition, it is included for discussion. Although it would be helpful for you to read through this guidebook section by section, some of the information will be freestanding and not based on what was written previously. There will be times when you may want to reference a particular issue, so we have tried to present topics, and what you need to know about them, as completely as possible in each section.

Who should be involved?

Teachers and other professionals should provide assistance and support throughout the transition process. It is important for them to know what you are thinking or trying to accomplish so that you can work together effectively. Hopefully, you will be able to use the information in this guidebook to more clearly identify who needs to be involved in the planning process and at what point different people and/or services

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need to be included, especially as you get closer to exiting the educational program.

The value of directly involving students with disabilities, including those with multiple disabilities, in the planning meetings goes beyond transition services. As one student, age fifteen, commented after actively participating in his annual review for the first time in ten years: *"I feel like a real person!"* This simple statement underscores how important it is for students and families to make an investment in this planning process.

There are many factors that can interfere with transition planning, not the least of which is confusion over who is responsible for what. Different people will play different roles throughout the transition process so during the planning meetings it is important to identify who will do what. These people-both professionals and friends-will probably change over time and although some changes are predictable, many are not and gaps in services and supports can occur. It is important for you to keep in mind that whether you get what you want depends on your willingness to take an active role in this process, even when the path to get where you want to be is not clear or seems blocked. Busy schedules, limited expectations, inaccessible services, lack of follow-through, missing or incorrect information-all these and more can lead to frustration with transitions. We hope that this guidebook will serve as an ongoing reference and assist you through the difficulties as well as the successes.

Remember, change presents us with opportunities as well as challenges

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Section 2

REGULATIONS AFFECTING TRANSITION PLANNING

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By Jaskulski, T., Metzler, C., and Zierman, S., May 1990
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1234 Massachusetts Ave NW, Suite 103, Washington, DC 20005

SECTION 2: REGULATIONS AFFECTING TRANSITION PLANNING

Are any of these activities part of the student's future?

The purpose of including information on the laws and regulations in this guidebook is to reinforce the fact that **transition services are mandated by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)** (P.L.101-476). In other words, they are not optional. All students who are classified as having a disability by their local Individualized Education Plan (IEP) team need preparation to fully participate in community life as adults. It is important to know what constitutes transition services and that planning is an ongoing, dynamic process.

What are the specifics?

Transition Services refers to a coordinated set of activities for a student with a disability, designed within an outcome oriented process, that promotes movement from school to post-school activities, including, but not limited to:

- post-secondary education;
- vocational training;
- integrated competitive employment (including supported employment)
- continuing and adult education;
- adult services;
- independent living; and
- community participation.

Comment: *As you can see, the first part of the definition of transition services can include an aspect of adult life with which students and families will need some assistance. This does not mean that the school district must provide you with housing, for example, but it does mean that they must discuss with you, during the planning meetings, where you can get information and help with this issue.*

The wording for outcome statements should be "soft". Use phrases like "Student plans to", "hopes to", "is working towards."

The **long term adult outcome statements** are destination statements, based upon the student's hopes and dreams for his/her self. They are future statements not behavioral objectives. There should be at least one outcome statement in each of the following areas that is developed in collaboration with the student and family.

- *Career/Employment:* Will the student become part of the workforce?
- *Post Secondary Education/Training:* Will the student go on to further education? This includes all lifelong learning activities such as: adult education, skill improvement workshops, training for hobbies as well as two and four-year college, armed forces and technical schools.
- *Community/Residential Living:* How will the student be interacting with the community (outside of work and further education) and where would they like to live?

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The **coordinated set of activities** must be based on the individual student's needs, taking into account the student's preferences and interests, and shall include needed activities in the following areas:

- instruction;
- community experiences;
- related services;
- the development of employment and other post-school adult-living objectives; and
- if appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation.

Address creative strategies for the individual to live, learn and earn in the community as an adult.

Finally, participating agencies are identified. These are agencies, other than the local school district, which have agreed to provide transition services to the student. Collaborative planning and activities also provides information for Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) and the school to co-develop their service plans (the school develops the Individualized Education Program (IEP), DVR develops the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)).

For transition to be effective, collaborative planning is often critical to the ongoing delivery of necessary services for the student.

Comment: *You will not be expected to know all of this information when you begin the transition planning process. Remember that this is not just one meeting. Since transition planning will begin as early as age fourteen, you can expect that needs, desires, and expectations will change and that you can shape the plan to fit your student's needs.*

Also, important are the related services that support you in achieving your educational, vocational, and other community-based goals. **Related Services** refers to:

- speech pathology and audiology;
- psychological services;
- school social work;
- physical therapy;
- occupational therapy;
- counseling services, including vocational and other rehabilitation counseling services;
- certain medical services;
- school health services;
- parent counseling and training;
- other appropriate developmental or corrective support services;
- appropriate access to recreation; and
- other appropriate support services.

What does the student need during school years to reach his or her goals?

*For students with legal blindness, rehabilitation teaching and orientation and mobility training are also considered to be related services.

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The Colorado Department of Education website is: www.cde.state.co.us. The Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation website is: www.cdhs.state.co.us

School-to-Work Act:

- ***motivates youth to stay in school***
- ***provides enriched learning experiences***
- ***increases opportunities for careers that are non-traditional for race, gender, or disability***

Rehab Act:

- ***"Disability is a natural part of human experience..."***
- ***Section 504 prohibits discrimination.***

Comment: *Remember that these services will be provided only as they relate to the student's educational, vocational, and other community based goals. Therefore, it is very important that each participant in this process identify what the student will need and then write it into the Individualized Education Program (IEP). Since some of these services will be necessary supports in adult life, it would be good to explore the community resources that are available for adults while students are still in school.*

The transition planning process is meant to encourage the IEP teams to look beyond the traditional educational focus of the IEP and to be creative. For example, transition services may include travel training, self-advocacy, real work experiences, and/or involvement with community-based social networks.

In addition to IDEA, the **School-to-Work Opportunities Act of 1994 (P.L.103-239)** calls for major restructuring and significant systemic changes that would facilitate the creation of a universal, high quality, school-to-work transition system that enables *all* students in the United States to successfully enter the workforce. It specifically refers to students with disabilities when addressing the issues of motivating youth to remain in, or to return to, school and strive to succeed by providing enriched learning experiences and assistance in obtaining good jobs and/or post-secondary educational opportunities. Another reference highlights the need to increase opportunities by enabling individuals to prepare for careers that are not traditional for their race, gender, or disability. Individualized assessment and planning should lead to jobs/careers that are based on the student's interests and preferences, *not* according to expectations based on labels or by what is available in the community.

- For additional information on the **School-to-Work Opportunities Act,** contact the National School-to-Work Learning and Information Center in Washington, D.C., at 800-251-7236. Their web site is www.stw.ed.gov. Colorado school-to-career website is www.cde.state.co.us/schooltocareer/ .

It is also important to note that The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 which was amended to reflect the philosophy and service needs of the 1990's makes provisions for training, equipment, and other services that people with disabilities may need in order to work and live independently in their communities. The Rehabilitation Act states that:

> *"Disability is a natural part of human experience and in no way diminishes the right of individuals to live independently; enjoy self-determination; make choices; contribute to society; pursue meaningful careers; and enjoy full inclusion and integration in the economic, political, social, cultural, and educational mainstream of American Society."*
>
> [Section 2(a)(3) of the Rehabilitation Act]

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act supports the belief that students with disabilities must have the same options as students without disabilities, including access to all school programs, buildings, and activities. As you can see, though, the Rehabilitation Act has application over the life span of people with disabilities.

- For additional information on the **Rehabilitation Act of 1973** as it relates to students and employment, you may contact the PACER (Parent Advocacy Coalition for Educational Rights) Center-Project Pride, at 612-827-2966. Their website is www.pacer.org.

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ADA promotes inclusion, integration, and accessibility across the life span of people with disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 further promotes aspects of inclusion, integration, and accessibility in community employment, programs, and services across the life span. ADA specifically prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in employment, state and local government, public accommodations, commercial facilities, transportation, and telecommunications.

- Contact either the Rocky Mountain Disability and Business Technical Assistance Center at: 719-444-0268 (Voice/TTY) or Nationwide Technical Assistance 800-949-4232 (Voice/TTY) or on the Internet at: http://www.ada-infonet.org/ or the PACER Center (website listed at the bottom of the preceding page).

Getting Help

If you feel that you are not receiving the services or accommodations to which you are legally entitled after following the written procedure for appeals that is available through your local school district, then you may contact:

- Colorado Department of Education, Special Education Services Unit: 303-866-6694. Or on the Internet at www.cde.state.co.us.
- PEAK Parent Center: www.peakparent.org and via phone at 719-531-9400, Hotline at 800-284-0251
- The Legal Center for Persons with Disabilities and Older Persons phone is 303-722-0300 (Voice/TDD) and Toll free at 800-288-1376 (Voice/TDD), and on the Internet at www.thelegalcenter.org
- For vocational issues you may contact the Client Assistance Program through the Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. The phone number is 720-884-1234 (Voice/TDD), www.cdhs.state.co.us/ods/dvr.index.html.

Section 3

PARTICIPATING IN TRANSITION PLANNING

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SECTION 3: PARTICIPATING IN TRANSITION PLANNING

What's the point? All parents hope that our child's school years will lead smoothly into adult life.

All parents hope that their child's school years will lead smoothly into adult life. Transition planning provides us with an opportunity to make this happen. Transition planning helps to identify and obtain various experiences both during and after school, course work, programs, services, and supports needed as students with disabilities move through their secondary school years. Transition planning also helps link students to adult community resources as they complete their school years. The student with disabilities is the central focus of this planning. Both the student and his or her family are essential members of any transition planning team and help direct this planning process.

Active participation is both important and necessary. Families can ensure that transition planning takes place by initiating this process. This may especially be needed if parents find that the school program is not being pro-active about planning or is merely addressing transition in a perfunctory way. Families have every right to make certain that planning activities are scheduled, that appropriate individuals participate, and that planning is interactive, personalized, meaningful, and produces results.

"I do see teachers as experts. But they have to understand that I did not just meet a child in September. I have been caring for his needs for years. They need to see me as an expert too!" (Maine parent)

If you decide to take the lead in transition planning with your son or daughter, it would be helpful to identify one individual within the school system to assist in establishing collaboration between your family, school, and the community. Establishing a link to and connection with the school will provide the support and information you need to feel confident about achieving the goals that are set to experience positive outcomes.

What is Collaboration?
- ***Networking***
- ***Service Coordination***
- ***Cooperation***
- ***Collaboration***

WHAT IS COLLABORATION?

There are basically four ways in which people can interact to establish or improve services and plan for young adults preparing for transition from school to post-school activities.

- Through **networking**, people gain an awareness of available resources and discover how to access or refer individuals to those services. An example of networking might be talking with local business owners to identify possible job training opportunities for students. While networking is an essential step in collaboration, it will not be enough for students who have complex transition service needs.
- **Service coordination** assisting selection and scheduling of services. In coordinating, people arrange for a student with disabilities to receive specific services from different agencies (for example, one agency making a phone call to another agency to determine their respective roles and to schedule activities).
- With **cooperation**, people look for ways to support and complement one another's transition services. For example, an adult service agency may accept a student's recent test results from his or her school to determine the student's eligibility for services. This contact would prevent the student from being tested twice and would save the adult agency time and expense.
- **Collaboration** begins with networking, coordination, and cooperation and then

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requires team members to share decisions, responsibility, and trust. It requires that team members invest time and energy to come up with options and design strategies for carrying out these plans. Because collaboration requires lots of time and energy, it is impossible to make all decisions collaboratively. In some instances, the desired result can be achieved through networking, coordination, or cooperation. Working together, or collaboratively, invites participation of multiple service providers and the use of multiple resources.

How do you begin?

"Even when services are available, many with special needs do not get to them until it is far too late. Because of confusing policies and an absence of coordination, we spend enormous amounts of time debating just who is responsible for these young people rather than working together to address their needs." (New York parent)

Figure out a way to make all the pieces fit together.

CREATING THE TRANSITION PLAN

After the IEP transition team identifies the student's preferences and interests and identifies the agencies and resources that may be helpful in planning the student's transition, it is time to sit down and figure out a way to make all the pieces fit together. This takes time, creativity, and patience, but the rewards are worth the effort. Remember that other people have done this before. Consult school professionals, disability groups, parent organizations, and other families for their suggestions.

Planning an effective transition can involve many different individuals and agencies. Examples of potential participants and linkages are provided in the chart on the next page.

[From NICHCY-Transition Planning: A Team Effort, by Sharon H. DeFur Transition Summary TS10, January 1999]

(NICHCY - The National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities, 800-695-0285, www.nichcy.org, NICHCY is the national information and referral center that provides information on disabilities and disability-related issues for families, educators, and other professionals. Their special focus is children and youth (birth to age 22).

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Potential Participants and Linkages to the Transition Team

Potential Participant	Relationship to Transition Services
Adult Education Representative	provides information about lifelong education options
Advocacy Organization(s) Representative	may offer self-advocacy training or support groups for young adults
Assistive Technology Representative	provides expertise on devices that can open doors to opportunities
At-Risk/Prevention Specialist	offers counseling and support on teen pregnancy, alcohol, and drugs
Business-Education Partnership Rep.	provides links between schools and local businesses and industry
Community Action Agency Representative	may link team to resources for traditionally under-represented groups
Correctional Education Staff	provides incarcerated youth with continued learning opportunities
Drop-Out Prevention Representative	provides youth with alternatives to dropping out of school
Employer	offers insight into expectations; promotes hiring of people with disabilities
Employment Specialist	provides job development, placement, coaching
Guidance Counselor	provides information on curriculum, assessment, graduation requirements, college
Health Department/School Nurse	Provides guidance on community health services and health care advise
Higher Education Representative	Provides information on post-secondary services to students with disabilities
Housing Agency Representative	Assists in developing housing options
Leisure Program Representative	Knows available program options within the community
Local Disability Representative (e.g., CP of Colorado)	Provides information and training (often serves all disabilities, not just one)
Parent Training Information Center Rep.	Provides training on transition planning and advocacy services to families
Religious Community Member	Can provide social support to young adults and their families
Residential Service Provider (Community Services)	Can help access specialized housing
Social Worker	Provides guidance and arranges for case management, support, respite care
Special Olympics Representative	Provides sports training, competition, and recreational opportunities for youth
Therapists	Provides behavioral, physical, occupation, and speech services in the community
Transportation Representative	Offers expertise about transportation options and training
Very Special Arts Representative	Provides information on art programs and opportunities for youth
Vocational Educator	Provides job training; teaches work-related skills
YMCA/YWCA/REC Center	Offers recreation and leisure programs

INDIVIDUALIZED PLANNING

Jeff Goedeke of People First of California said, "We need the one truly basic right that is granted to everyone: the right to be ourselves. Once we have fulfilled that need, then we can go on and talk about the other needs we have."

Choosing the Individualized Planning Process

Individualized or **Person-Centered Planning,** sometimes referred to as Strength-Based Assessment, Personal Futures Planning, MAPS (Making Action Plans) or Circles of Support, is a style of planning that can be used effectively in the transition process and integrated into the IEP transition meeting. The following information provides an overview of Person-centered planning:

Person-Centered Planning is an ongoing problem-solving process used to help people with disabilities plan for their future. In person-centered, or futures planning, groups of people focus on an individual and that person's vision of what they would like to do in the future. This person-centered team needs to identify opportunities for the focus person to develop personal relationships, participate in their community, increase control over their own lives, and develop the skills and abilities needed to achieve these goals. Person-Centered Planning depends on the commitment of a team of individuals who care about the focus person. These individuals take action to make sure that the strategies discussed in planning meetings are implemented.

For a plan to be successful it is best if:

- People have a clear and shared appreciation of the talents and capacities of the focus person.
- People have a common understanding of what the focus person wants.
- The group involved agrees to meet regularly to review activities.
- The group includes a strong advocate or family member assuring that the interest of the focus person is being met.
- The group includes a person committed to making connections in the local community.

A lifetime process

This is the beginning of a process that continues throughout a lifetime, not a product.

"Interactive planning provides a positive process to assist a committed group of individuals to help create and support a desirable future with a person with a disability."
(Beth Mount & John O'Brien)

From Forging a New Era 1990 Reports on People with Developmental Disabilities, by Jaskulski, T., Metzler, C., and Zierman, S., May 1990

[From Pacer Center's TATRA Project (Technical Assistance about Training on the Rehabilitation Act) by WIN-MILL CAUSE, Michigan's Center of Expertise.]

To access Person-Centered Planning Specialists in your area, please consult with the Special Education Director in your local school district, call the Colorado Department of Education, Special Education Unit at 303-866-6694, or contact your local advocacy organization.

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PROMOTING INDEPENDENCE, SELF-ADVOCACY AND SELF-DETERMINATION

"After I pass away, where does my child go? I want my son to be independent- to know he can live on his own." (Maryland parent)

The challenge of promoting independence for student with disabilities is related to:

- ***Risk-taking***
- ***Letting go***
- ***Responsibilities***
- ***Choices***

The student's foundation for active participation in transition planning is based on the principles and skills of independence, self-determination, and self-advocacy. Many parents of students with special needs continually strive to encourage sons or daughters to be as independent as possible.

Being part of a community also assumes that people both with and without disabilities are naturally interdependent. Community inclusion should be a focus of life planning.

Independence and self-sufficiency have a unique and different meaning for each child. Since we can never be certain what challenges lie ahead, we must prepare ourselves and our children to handle all possible life experiences today and in the future, using whatever resources we can access. A holistic approach to planning, which carefully considers all life areas, helps us to develop a realistic picture and evaluate what supports and safe-guards must be put into place, enabling us to have a sense of security about our child's safety and well-being because new experiences inevitably involve some degree of risk-taking.

Self-determination means being in charge

Self-determination means being in charge of our own choices, solving problems, and accepting responsibility for the consequences of our actions. These actions are linked to becoming independent. Parents and educators need to look for opportunities to encourage children and adolescents to develop and practice these skills. This process begins in early childhood and continues throughout one's lifetime. One way students learn about self-determination is by observing and modeling the actions of adults and often their peers. Promoting greater independence, self-determination, and self-advocacy is a particularly important focus area as students near the end of the school years that mark the beginning of adulthood.

Advocacy vs. self-advocacy

Young people, including students with disabilities, must increasingly begin to take more responsibility, to the greatest extent possible, for the choices, decisions, and actions that will directly affect them, including expressing what they think and feel. It may be helpful to conceptualize our role as parents shifting from advocating *for* our sons or daughters, to advocating *with* them, and then *supporting* their self-advocacy, thus promoting greater autonomy or self-determination. To accomplish self-determination, both educators and families should provide information and experiences that will help students learn to speak out for what they want to happen in their lives especially after completing their school years. For some students, there will be a legal transferring of parental rights as they reach the age of majority. However, many students with disabilities will not be able to provide informed consent. In such cases, provision must be made for appointing the parent or guardian to represent the student's interest.

Parents: Think about opportunities you and your child's teachers have used or can use to promote your son or daughter's independence, self-advocacy, and self-determination.

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Students: Are you participating in discussions about what's happening in your life? Have you attended your IEP meetings where teachers, parents and school staff talk about how things are going for you and what's next? Have you told your parents and teachers about what you are interested in, enjoy doing, and what you might want to do in the future? You have a right and a responsibility to be participating in, and even leading discussions, and meetings when people are talking about and planning for you. Whose life is it, anyway?

Self-determination involves:

- feeling good about yourself;
- being willing and able to do or say something that is important to you;
- thinking up interesting ideas;
- figuring out how to deal with problems;
- taking charge of your life by having dreams, setting goals, and then working to achieve those dreams and goals.

Strategies to support and equip students with disabilities for active participation

The following are some strategies to help equip students for actively participating in their planning meetings and to support them during the transition planning process:

- Reinforce the idea that planning for the future with the support of family, school, and community is not only important, it's a "cool" thing to do.
- Demonstrate an IEP transition meeting and provide a role-playing experience.
- Teach self-advocacy and help students gain these skills.
- Provide everyday opportunities for choice and decision-making experiences.
- Help the student identify a support person within the school to act as a facilitator and, if possible, assist in setting up a collaborative transition planning team with the student using a person-centered planning approach. This person could be the classroom teacher, guidance counselor, social worker, transition coordinator, or other school personnel.
- Explain how to schedule meetings including options for where and when to hold the meeting using flexibility and assuring an environment and setting which will make everyone feel comfortable, welcome, and relaxed.
- Talk about who should and could be invited and how to arrange for their participation. In addition to the required school personnel, this can include people who know the student very well such as a friend, grandparent, coach, or therapist; people in the community who can provide opportunities such as a neighborhood business owner or spiritual leader; vocational counselors familiar with adult services; and others. Bring in new people as the plan develops or changes.

Respect for:
- ***Cultural diversity***
- ***Language differences***
- ***Communication styles***

- If communicating presents a barrier due to language, culture, or disability, determine who can be an advocate, a support person/interpreter, or what assistive device may be used.
- Discuss the importance of the student's participation in various assessment activities in order to have supporting information about his or her strengths, challenges, talents, likes, dislikes, interests, and preferences. This should include understanding the disability and thinking about what you are good at, enjoy doing, what you need help with, and special accommodations you may benefit from.
- Teach students about their civil rights under the law such as ADA.

Thinking about the future

- Review using a framework of the life planning areas including:
  - continuing education;
  - employment/community work;
  - living arrangements;
  - life in the community: recreation, leisure time, hobbies, cultural enrichment, spiritual/religious affiliations, civic organizations, and activities;
  - financial arrangements including income and living expenses;
  - legal services including guardianship and trusts;
  - healthy life styles: medical and dental care, exercise and nutrition, mental health and counseling services, and friendships;
  - transportation; and
  - safety nets/crisis intervention.
- Explore potential opportunities and experiences the student may wish to find out about, who to ask, how to contact them, and things to consider discussing at the meeting.
- Discuss ways to figure out what you want to accomplish, how to set an agenda, and ways to organize the information. Prepare notes or other reminders to bring along. Practice how to share your ideas.

Strategizing for meetings

- Prior to the meeting, identify with the student, an individual on the team who will be responsible for recording the ideas and strategies that are discussed and the best way to organize this information so that it can be easily used.
- Evaluate how much time you are speaking and how much time the student is speaking. Discuss the importance of giving everyone a chance to speak and of listening to his or her comments with an open mind. Enable the student to feel comfortable responding and disagreeing. Ask people to use words or gestures that everyone can understand. Remind the participants at your meeting to be positive and ask questions that help students discover their capabilities, learn more about obstacles, and identify beginning steps.

Non-traditional considerations:

- ***Student is an equal partner***
- ***Avoid labeling***
- ***Think outside the box***

- Consider the student an equal partner on the planning team and be patient and respectful, not patronizing, as they explore their past and future goals.
- Avoid labeling and having limited expectations for students with disabilities.
- Anticipate potential differences of opinions between student and parent, student and school personnel, parent and school, and student, school, and the community. Teach, practice, and support strategies for conflict resolution. Be sure that participants do not bring their preconceived notions and other "baggage" into the planning process. Insist on participants being nonjudgmental.
- Develop a communication system with the team members to help the student keep track of what is being accomplished between meetings.

Keep in touch

In order for this planning to have successful outcomes, the student must "buy-into" this process and feel "ownership" of the decisions made and the actions to be taken. This includes such choices as which classes to schedule, what work experiences to complete, and what clubs and organizations to join, to name a few.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES:

It's My Meeting! A Family/Consumer Pocket Guide to Participating in Person-Centered Planning
Training Resource Network (TRN)
P O Box 439
St Augustine, FL 32185-0439
$8.00
Website: www.trninc.com

PRO-ED's Series on Transition:
Self-Determination Strategies for Adolescents in Transition
800-897-3212

Choice-Maker Self-determination Series
Sopris West Education Services
4093 Specialty Place
Longmont, CO 80504
Phone: 303-651-2829
Fax: 888-819-7767
800-547-6747
Website: www.sopriswest.com
Email: customerservice@sopriswest.com

PEAK Parent Center
611 North Weber, Suite 200
Colorado Springs, CO 80903
Phone: 719-531-9400
Fax: 719-531-9452
Hotline: 800-284-0251
Website: www.peakparent.org

Colorado Department of Education
Website: www.cde.state.co.us
This site includes numerous fact sheets, handbooks, and curricula that can be downloaded or ordered. New products will be added as they are developed.

Section 4

ORGANIZING TRANSITION PLANNING

Unless otherwise indicated, all parent and consumer quotes are from
Forging a New Era 1990 Reports on People with Developmental Disabilities,
By Jaskulski, T., Metzler, C., and Zierman, S., May 1990
Published by National Association of Developmental Disabilities Council,
1234 Massachusetts Ave NW, Suite 103, Washington, DC 20005

SECTION 4: ORGANIZING TRANSITION PLANNING

Necessary Information:

- ***Where to begin***

From the start, transition planning requires a certain amount of information that can and should begin with the student's preferences and interests for the future. Coordinating this information with educational, vocational, and community involvement goals is a collaborative effort that takes time and creative energy. Within an environment of self-determination, it may be helpful to begin with either person-centered planning or a strengths-based assessment, which were discussed in Section 3, understanding that the focus of this planning or assessment process should always be on the student's preferences and concerns.

- ***Assessments***

Assessments may be formal or informal but they should always be functional, providing useful information about the educational, vocational, and community-based services that are needed. The assessment process must be well-planned and organized so that it provides timely information at different stages in transition planning. For example, post-school outcomes must be clarified at the beginning of this process so that some direction may be given to the planned goals, activities, and experiences that might follow.

Information regarding grading, diplomas, and graduation requirements in your local school district will be important to consider in your planning.

There are several informal assessment strategies and tools that may be used for organizing student information. One is the portfolio which can be used as an outline of suggested transition components, a place to record transition activities that the student has completed, and a way to compile and save copies of program goals, sample resumes, summaries of job shadows, and letters of recommendation.

- ***Situational***
- ***Environmental***

Personal interviews and **questionnaires**, as well as **situational and environmental assessments**, can be used to gather a wide range of highly individualized information, all of which should have the purpose of enhancing the planning process. The **situational assessment** can be used for observing, recording, and evaluating a wide range of behaviors that impact a student's ability to succeed in personal, social and daily living settings, as well as the work setting. This type of assessment has the advantage of observing and describing behaviors as they occur in natural settings as opposed to the typical testing situation for more standardized tests. An example of what might be looked at in the work setting is the student's ability to get along with co-workers, to accept supervisor criticism, to follow instructions from the job coach, and to be punctual. Similarly, the **environmental assessment** pertains to the relationship between the individual and specific environmental demands at school, at home, at work, or in the community. Each student needs to be individually assessed in terms of his or her unique capacity to meet the natural environmental requirements in the given setting under consideration. For example, the types of transportation available varies from place to place, city to town, so that the necessary skills needed to access transportation is both student and environmentally driven.

- ***Vocational/ Career***

There are also a number of effective, student-centered **vocational or career-planning assessments** that can be utilized as part of the ongoing development of transition related goals. **Vocational assessments** address a student's general needs, interests, aptitudes, and abilities as they relate to productive work activity in the areas of home, community, vocation, and avocation. **Vocational assessment** is the evaluation of specific vocational interests or preferences and skills. There are a number of assessment models available to school personnel and other professionals that can be used to provide all the transition team members with important information that will

help guide the successful planning and implementation of educational, vocational, and community life goals.

[Reference: Browning, Philip, *Transition in Action for Youth and Young Adults with Disabilities*, Auburn University, AL, 1997]

The role of rehabilitation counselors - what do they do?

"Technology has made it possible for us to express our ideas and feelings and let you discover that we do have things to say. Computer technology is one of the most important keys in making a person with a disability become more productive and independent." (Minnesota consumer)

Another tool for career exposure is the Colorado Navigator system from the CO Department of Labor which provides access to information that you can use to find a job, plan a career or locate available programs for education and training. Website: http://navigator.cdle.state.co.us

The vocational rehabilitation agency that is designated as being responsible for providing the services under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 in Colorado is the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR). The rehabilitation counselors at DVR can play an important role in transition planning with regard to identifying the supports an individual will need and how they can be delivered post graduation. Rehabilitation counselors potentially could be of assistance in career counseling, vocational assessment, work placement, and referral for medical and therapeutic services as well as assistive technological aids. Funding for assistive technology can be provided if the assistive technology device supports the individual's ability to work or to be educated when the goal is gainful employment.

"An appropriate wheelchair is as important for mobility as legs are for walking; an augmentative communication device is as important for talking as a voice." (Hawaii consumer)

The Appendix includes a transition checklist of activities recommended at various ages during the transition process.

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Section 5

COMMUNITY LIFE

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SECTION 5: COMMUNITY LIFE

Setting short and long-term goals for living in the community

The process of transition planning includes a series of short-term and long-term steps to enable students with disabilities to make choices and decisions about what it means for them to have a full life. Such choices will include long-term adult outcomes and short-term goals with accompanying activities to put into place during upcoming weeks, months, and in the coming year or two. Students should also have some thoughts and ideas about developing opportunities and activities that will lead to setting and achieving their long-term goals. Accessing community resources and being included in community life involve making many choices and decisions about such questions as:

- Where and with whom to live?
- Where to work, study or volunteer time?
- With whom to have personal relationships?
- Where to get services such as health care?
- How and where to spend leisure time?
- How to get to the places you need and want to go?
- From whom to get assistance and support?

Look for support from:
- ***friends***
- ***neighbors***
- ***family members***
- ***co-workers***
- ***community groups***

Social contacts, personal relationships, and community networks enhance the quality of life for most people. Informal supports and formal programs/services should be smoothly blended together to create a full array of opportunities for community living for individuals with disabilities. Informal supports, sometimes called natural supports, refer to people such as friends and acquaintances, family members, co-workers, neighbors, fellow workers, and those who choose to have some individual and personal role in our lives if we desire such involvement. These are *not* people who are paid to spend time with us or perform some function or service.

Community experiences are a crucial part of preparation for adult life and should begin during the school years. These experiences should be in addition to a student's extracurricular school activities such as special-interest clubs, band or choral groups, sports teams, and student government. Sometimes linkages or special arrangements and accommodations must be made to assist or support students in participating in school-based opportunities.

Find activities to join both in and out of school

> *"Plans for young adults need to have higher expectations. Don't just fit round pegs into square holes. We need to build on my child's strengths. She can make a contribution to the community. But we have to help her plan for it and help her find a place that can be appreciative of her special gifts." (Maine parent)*

Practice community living by looking around you and taking advantage of real-life opportunities

Identifying community experiences implies looking beyond the school setting. The best opportunities and practical ideas for community experiences can be found by simply observing and taking advantage of what occurs in our daily lives. Potential resources for community experiences may be found in local businesses and such places as a bank; pet shop; card, video, music, or book store; movie theater or performing arts center; restaurant or supermarket; pharmacy, hair salon, gas station, garage, or car dealer; and law, veterinary, dental, or physician's office. These locations may provide excellent opportunities for students to gain skills in areas such as shopping and money

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management, homemaking responsibilities, personal self care, health care, local travel and transportation, entertainment, jobs, and many other areas.

Practice the spirit of volunteerism

Community organizations may also provide experiences for students in areas such as volunteerism and community service; fun, leisure time, and healthy life-style activities; social interactions; and relationship building. Using personal community networks may be the key to creating such opportunities. The list could easily include a local firehouse or volunteer ambulance corps, a church or temple, civic and service clubs, the local hospital, health club, YMCA, youth center, and an array of various other entities. Community networks are very closely linked to individual neighborhoods, families, and career circles as well as to cultural, ethnic, and religious affiliations.

Use experiences to find a direction for the future

School and community experiences will help students identify their interests and preferences, develop skills in community living, and begin to formulate a career path. Parents are advocates for their children with or without disabilities. It is common for many people to acquire new opportunities through networking.

"I get by with a little help from my friends." (The Beatles)

Putting all the pieces together

An additional factor to pay close attention to during the student's transition planning is that, both during and after completing school, most community life activities are inter-connected and interdependent. For example, where we work, spend our day, or receive our education may depend upon where we live and the available transportation. Where and with whom we choose to live may depend upon the following factors: The proximity to family and other important people in our lives; access to shopping and other vital services; and our financial situation or the ability to obtain necessary supports. This interdependence is an important reason that a holistic, total life planning approach is an effective way to do transition planning.

Consider what it means to have a good quality of life

We can measure what is a good quality of life by considering such questions as:

- Are we satisfied with the services we receive?
- Are we leading a full and active daily life with activities of our choosing?
- Do we have privacy and enough time for ourselves?
- Do we have meaningful and fulfilling relationships?
- Do we feel part of our community?
- Are we in good health and happy with our life-style choices?
- Are we safe from harm and do we feel secure in our environment?
- Do others treat us fairly and with dignity and respect; are our rights as citizens being violated?
- Are we achieving our personal goals and dreams?

[Adapted from Gardner, J.F., Nudler, S., & Chapman, M.S., *Assessment Workbook for Use With Personal Outcome Measures*, by The Council on Quality and Leadership in Supports for People with Disabilities, 1997. Located at 100 West Road, Suite 406, Towson, MD 21204.]

Parents and students should also continually re-evaluate decisions about community life keeping those kinds of questions in mind.

Employment and Work Experiences

Working towards self-sufficiency

"I want to work for the same reason other people want to work, which is to support myself and to feel like part of the world. Why is that so hard for people to understand?" (Maine consumer)

Employment is a key area in life planning because it provides opportunities for personal growth. When we think about employment, one of the first things we consider is the potential for greater financial self-sufficiency. Employment enables us to become more independent and have more choice in acquiring the services and the material things that we need and want. Having a job enables us to have a sense of purpose and pride in our accomplishments; the respect of others, social status, and prestige; a sense of belonging and friendships; learning experiences and new challenges; a way to contribute; and a career.

Having high expectations

Most students with disabilities will eventually become competitively employed, some will participate in supported employment, and others will benefit from community participation and integrated work-related learning activities. Parents should not permit children with disabilities to be "pigeon-holed" into certain types of work due to labeling and limited expectations.

"I wish I had a job that pays and benefits myself and other people. I want to use what I have." (Maryland consumer)

"Supported employment is a must. We spend a lifetime building up our children's self-esteem, telling them they can do things, and when they graduate, it's as if the rug is pulled out from under them." (Alaska parent)

Develop a resume of work experiences

The high school years are an opportune time for students to participate in an array of employment training and experiences. Vocational counselors and special education professionals have described the importance of students with disabilities completing school armed with a resume. This resume should cover multiple work experiences including volunteerism and unpaid internships, apprenticeships, and paid employment. Resumes can be developed that include both in-school and community work experiences. Work opportunities during the school years are valuable in demonstrating that the student has had real work experience, has performed and acquired specific job skills, and has had an interest in a particular type of work activity. Sometimes a job that was developed for a student as part of their school transition services can become a regular job after completion of their school years. For some students, this job may be the beginning of a career.

Get transition services written into the IEP

Finding and coordinating work experiences for students should be part of the planning process and may be listed as transition services on the student's Individualized Educational Plan (IEP). The plan may include receiving support from a job developer, a job coach, a travel trainer, and other professionals to ensure successful work experiences as part of the school day. The plan may also require some consultation related to strategies for job modifications, work adaptations, and reasonable accommodations. Oftentimes, accommodations or adaptations may be minor and require low-tech, simple solutions.

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For example, one student was hired by a bank as a bulk teller (coin counter). The job worked out well until the bank officer delivered a new piece of equipment that was placed upon a high counter, replacing a freestanding machine. The employee happened to be too short to reach the top of this new piece of equipment. The bank supervisor purchased a stool for him to stand on, enabling the employee to successfully complete his job task.

Think of creative ways to help find jobs in the community

Although support services would not usually be provided by the school district after school hours, students with disabilities may also benefit from work and/or volunteer experiences outside of school. After school hours, weekends, and summer vacation times may be well suited for such experiences. Many high school students without disabilities volunteer and also have jobs. Parents can be very instrumental in helping their son or daughter find volunteer activities or part-time jobs. A student's self-esteem may improve as he or she becomes less reliant on parents for some personal expenses enabling them to make choices about spending and saving money. For some students, it may also be a good time to open their own bank accounts, learn money management skills and practice budgeting, and become comfortable using public transportation or para-transit systems.

The best resources for helping students find work experiences are various community networks. Parents are known for being highly creative. Examples of some strategies have included:

- accessing city or county youth employment programs
- placing an advertisement in a business journal;
- using your own, or a family member's or friend's business;
- phoning a friend at a large corporation to explore a potential job and assist during the interview process;
- recruiting a friend who is a potential co-worker to serve as a job coach;
- using a barter system to exchange a job position for goods and services; and
- developing a work experience at a location where the student and his or her family are regular customers.
- trade job coaching duties with another parent

Check if natural supports are available in the workplace

Most students will be able to be competitively employed. Parents can play an important role in monitoring this kind of job experience and offering to provide feedback and strategies to the employer to help ensure success. Other students may benefit from supported employment in which a job coach assists with training and consultation. The following employment related information should help families understand and better evaluate supported work experiences. Since jobs often do not work out on a permanent basis for a variety of reasons, families may find themselves playing a role in arranging for alternative work-related experiences that will productively fill the time until another work placement is set up. Community networks and organizations can be good resources for parents and students to tap for job leads and other kinds of employment types of experiences.

NATURAL WORKPLACE SUPPORTS QUALITY CHECKLIST

I. General Employment Considerations

- Job is typical, valued work found in the community.
- Hours, pay, benefits are consistent with those of other employees doing the same or similar work.
- Job is consistent with person's interests and preferences.

I. Job-Related Support Considerations

- Job matches individual's abilities and is challenging.
- Position offers possibilities for task diversity and/or advancement.
- Identified work area is physically and socially proximate to other employees.
- Job tasks are similar to those performed by co-workers.
- Duties and routines permit typical social interactions and supports.
- Workers are friendly and, if appropriate, appear to reflect similar characteristics as the supported employee (e.g., age, sex, or interests).
- Employees seem to like their jobs; morale seems good.
- Workers attrition is low.
- General work environment seems cooperative, not competitive.
- Employer seems interested in, and open to, promoting employee diversity and providing a supportive atmosphere.
- Job orientation, instruction, and supervisory support is an established part of the employer's practices.

I. Ancillary Support Considerations

- Typical, reliable transportation options are available or can be arranged.
- Employer has a positive attitude toward job accommodations (adaptive equipment, job modifications) and special services (mobility, personal services), if necessary.

I. Preparing for Job Training

- The setting, tasks, and training strategies have been selected with attention to the job site's routines and the new employee's expressed preferences.
- Supported employee's daily activities and work routines correspond with those of co-workers.
- Employer orientation, training, and supervision roles have been clearly delineated.
- Potential, on-site support persons are identified.
- Role of consultant is clearly understood by all parties.
- Plan and strategies for reducing direct consultant involvement in training and supervision are discussed by everyone involved.
- Transportation that minimizes consultant role has been planned and agreed upon by all participants.
- Responses to any expressed employer concerns around training have been considered and dealt with.

I. Job Training Issues

- New employee is introduced in the most positive, typical, and valued way.
- Supported employee is oriented and trained as much as possible in the same way and by the same people as other employees.
- Plan and strategies for reducing direct consultant involvement in training and supervision is in effect.
- Orientation and training includes pre-work, break time, and post-work activities and interactions, if necessary.
- New employee is socially interacting with co-workers regularly and typically during training.
- The employment consultant, employer/supervisor, and new employee have opportunities to modify training methods.
- Transportation, health, social, and other problems that may have arisen have been addressed through the collaborative efforts of all involved parties.

I. Ongoing Supports

- Employee is socially involved with other co-workers on a regular, ongoing basis.
- Supported employee is socially interacting with co-workers in typical ways before and after work and during breaks.
- Co-workers are providing on-site supports.
- Co-workers supports are stable and increasing, if possible.
- Transportation is being provided by co-workers or sources other than the employment consultant.
- Supported employee is included in employer-initiated social activities such as picnics, retirement and holiday events, and sports leagues.
- Supported employee is invited to outside social events by co-workers, such as after work get-togethers, birthdays, and parties.
- Co-workers support individual at outside social events

I. Employer Indicators of quality

Employers often measure quality according to their own criteria, some of which are different than the indicators previously cited. Consultants should understand and anticipate employer perspectives and sttempt to balance their own concerns, and those of supported employees, with employer issues. The following list of indicators was compiled in collaboration with the project's employer advisory board.

- Employee has been adequately described to employer in terms of work skills, motivation, and behavior without violating individual's privacy, exaggerating labels, or minimizing expectations.
- Employer supervisory duties have been negotiated early and clearly.
- Consultant roles are clearly communicated, especially his or her anticipated reduced on-site presence.
- Employee training period and methods are specified and agreed upon by all participants
- Supported employee production is monitored as appropriate.
- Supported employee's relationships with co-workers are facilitated.
- Consultant assistance has been available when needed

[From *Developing Natural Supports in the Workplace: A Practitioner's Guide*, by Stephen T. Murphy and Patricia M. Rogan, published by Training Resource Network, Inc., 1994. Located at P O Box 439, St Augustine, FL 32085, 1-866-823-9800, Fax: 904-823-3554] Web site: www.trninc.com.

Planning for Employment

What Does This Student Need?	Actions the High School Transition Team May Recommend
ASSESSMENT that identifies current strengths, needs, interests, and preferences for post-school employment, independent living, and postsecondary training and/or education.	✓ interview youth regarding vocational interests and preferences (use other methods to assess interests and preferences of nonverbal students) ✓ conduct situational assessment (observation in a work setting) to assess endurance, strength, aptitude, social skills, interests, interactions ✓ conduct formal vocational evaluation by a trained evaluator ✓ self-assessment ✓ develop student's awareness of different jobs ✓ discuss health care issues that may impact employment
DEVELOPMENT of job and job placement options and awareness of skills needed	✓ analyze local labor market (contact employment services for state and request information for the region; contact local vocational advisory council; contact local chamber of commerce; review local want ads; contact employment agencies) to identify job openings and local labor needs ✓ get a range of work experiences: explorations, job shadowing, mentoring, and internships ✓ identify community programs offering job placement or training ✓ build network of employer and community program contacts ✓ provide training to employers on issues related to employees with disabilities.
MATCHING of student and job	✓ analyze the demands and expectations of the job site (e.g., duties, skill requirements, hours, location, transportation, wages, benefits, social skills) ✓ list the supports the student needs to be successful on the job ✓ match the student's assessment and the list of needed support to the job demands, including transportation to the job ✓ identify current gaps and needs for success ✓ identify needed natural support, job accommodations, adaptive equipment, and support services
School- and Work-based TRAINING & PREPARATION	✓ provide instruction to youth on job-seeking skills ✓ provide community-based work experiences related to career development ✓ identify potential service providers ✓ provide natural supports and accommodations ✓ provide instruction and training (pre-employment or on-the-job)
PLACEMENT and FOLLOW-ALONG	✓ work with employer to determine employee's response to the job demands and identify strategies to capitalize on strengths and minimize limitations ✓ provide natural supports and accommodations ✓ monitor progress and readiness for job advancement ✓ monitor changing need for natural supports ✓ make adjustments, as needed

Post-Secondary and Continuing Education

Think about and set lifelong learning goals

The fact that a student completes his or her school years should not mean that learning suddenly comes to a halt. Every new experience in life is a source of knowledge and information. Transition planning will include decisions about college and other post-secondary experiences and how a student's education may continue into adult life. For some students with disabilities transition planning will involve college planning that carefully focuses on continued supports and services. Technical, trade, apprenticeship, and occupational education programs will help some students pursue their employment and career goals. Other students will move directly into some type of job training, work experience or integrated day activities. Sheltered employment, or day training, traditionally a more restrictive model of services, is an option for others that is still available within the array of services. Students who are not attending college or another post-secondary education program and who have special talents, interests, or hobbies, may enjoy participating in continuing education. Opportunities for continuing education may be available through the adult education program of a local school district or other community resources. Examples include courses such as computers, dance instruction, fitness classes, martial arts, cooking, and acting.

Check the resources for educational opportunities after high school

A reference for higher education is the National Transition Network's Policy Update, Summer 1995, *Higher Education Amendments of 1992: Provisions for Youth With Disabilities in Higher Education*, National Transition Network Institute on Community Integration, University of Minnesota, 102 Pattee Hall, 150 Pillsbury Drive SE, Minneapolis MN 55455, Phone: 612-624-6300, Fax: 612-624-9344.

One reference handbook for post-secondary schools in Colorado has been produced by the Colorado Department of Education, Special Education Services Unit. *Colorado Options: a Handbook of Post-Secondary Education Services for Students with Disabilities* includes information that will help students determine their readiness for post-secondary education, understand their responsibilities for enrollment and participation in the post-secondary system, and determine which school would be most appropriate for them. Information about *Colorado Options* may be obtained by accessing the Colorado Department of Education web site at www.cde.state.co.us, or by calling 303-866-6694. The complete document can be downloaded at no cost, or hard copies may be purchased. Look under the Special Education, Transition Resources link on the website.

The article on the following page, "The Role of Adult Education in School-to-Work for Learners with Disabilities," that appeared in *Impact*, published by the Institute on Community Integration (UAP), Research and Training Center on Community Living, provides an overview of important considerations about continuing education. The JFK Partners/University of Colorado Health Sciences Center Project WIN Resource Guide located on the Internet at www.uchse.edu/projectwin, has a listing of adult and family literacy programs in Colorado. *Planning for Education After High School* from The National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities (NICHCY) has also been included because it will be useful in the transition planning process. NICHCY's website is www.nichcy.org.

The Role of Adult Education in School-to-Work for Learners with Disabilities

By Daryl Mellard

Students with disabilities constitute one of the most clearly recognizable groups of students leaving our schools without a high school diploma. Sometimes they drop out, other times they might be considered "pushouts." In either case, their future employment and education options are severely limited. For any school-to-work system that is going to meet the needs of these learners, local adult education programs are an invaluable resource, offering participants opportunities to complete diplomas or equivalents, and be better prepared for successful employment.

Students with disabilities constitute one of the most clearly recognizable groups of people leaving our schools without a high school diploma.

The U.S. Department of Education estimates that at least 30% of the enrollees in adult education programs have one or more disabilities, and a significant number of learners have more than one disability. In our research, learning disabilities, health disabilities, and psychological disabilities were the three areas most frequently identified among individuals enrolled in adult education. In serving learners of all ages, with and without disabilities, many of whom have not been successful in traditional secondary level schools, adult education programs offer varied curricular choices and instructional strategies that are targeted toward the specific educational needs of this group of learners.

Adult education programs - typically sponsored by a Community College, school district, or community-based organization – offer course work including Adult Basic Education in reading, writing, and math; and Adult Secondary Education, generally oriented to the General Education Development (GED) tests in math, science, writing, language arts, and social science. Other curricular offerings may include a learning strategies curriculum, social skills, pre-employment skills, and independent living competencies. Instruction in adult education is delivered using techniques that allow it to be tailored to the needs of individual learners, a significant feature for those who have not done well with typical secondary school curricula and who may need curricular adaptations. Instruction is delivered usually in one of three ways – independent study, tutoring, or in small groups. Independent study essentially involves learners working at their own pace in materials that match their skill levels and goals. In tutorial models, volunteer tutors, who are typically adults, provide instructional assistance to the learners. Small group instruction is the typical format of English as a Second Language courses and appears to be increasingly popular among adult education programs for learners in general.

One of the most significant changes occurring in adult education is the emergence of alternatives to the GED as a high school diploma. While the GED is widely recognized by employers as an acceptable high school alternative because of the rigor of its tests in five academic areas - math, science, writing, language arts, and social science - employers and agencies involved in welfare reform especially like two alternatives: competency-based and life experience curricula. These curricular models emphasize life skills that have greater application to employment settings than what is taught through the GED. The Adult High School Diploma or the External Diploma Program give credit for courses, the completion of independent study projects, and/or the demonstration of knowledge or skills through tests. Employers are willing to invest in training if employees or recruits demonstrate the necessary skills for employment potential, and these alternatives offer learners that opportunity.

While reliable reports are not available on the number of persons with disabilities who complete the GED or another alternative diploma program and then go on to participate in post-secondary education options or gain employment, we do know that attaining a high school diploma is a requisite for participation in most post-secondary settings and for obtaining jobs beyond the entry level positions in the service sector businesses. For the students we've followed in our research, adult education has played an important role in their preparation for work and further education. The most important factor in the success of adult education as an option in the education of learners with disabilities who have left high school without a diploma is, of course, its acceptance by the larger community as a viable educational alternative for students and an important resource for assuring that community members are well-educated and prepared to participate in community and employment activities.

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Planning for Education After High School

What Does This Student Need?	Actions the High School Transition Team May Recommend
ASSESSMENT that identifies current strengths, needs, interests, and preferences for post-school employment, independent living, and postsecondary training and/or education.	✓ assess student's self-advocacy skills, academic preparation, and college bound test scores ✓ assess student's technical skills, social skills, independent living skills ✓ interview youth regarding educational setting interests and preferences - size, setting, programs (use other methods to assess interests and preferences if student is nonverbal) ✓ identify youth's long-term career goals ✓ develop a list of supports student needs to achieve post-secondary education goals ✓ discuss health care issues that may impact student in post-secondary setting ✓ identify needed natural supports, academic or physical accommodations, and support services
DEVELOPMENT of post-secondary education options	✓ visit campuses ✓ participate in college night ✓ have college students with disabilities talk to youth ✓ research colleges and universities that offer special services to students with disabilities ✓ discuss financial issues ✓ discuss preferred location of college
MATCHING of student and post-secondary education setting	✓ analyze the demands and expectations of the post-secondary education setting-accessibility, support services availability, academic rigor, social culture, independent living setting ✓ match the student's assessment and list of needed supports to the demands of the post-secondary education setting
PREPARATION for post-secondary education	✓ provide developmental academic support and course work needed to prepare for post-secondary education goals ✓ assist youth with applications, interviews, and test preparation ✓ identify potential service providers ✓ develop natural supports ✓ provide self-advocacy training-(pre-employment or on-the-job)
PLACEMENT and FOLLOW-ALONG	✓ monitor progress in the post-secondary setting ✓ monitor changing need for natural supports ✓ monitor changing need for services ✓ advocate for changes and adjustments, as needed

Independent and Supported Living Opportunities

Moving on, moving out?

"As an adult I have the right to live my life as independently as everyone else. That right and my desire to exert that right should never be questioned. Somehow there seems to be a silent debate about whether I should really be assisted in living independently or whether I should live in a group home. And that should be my decision." (Maine consumer)

For many students, both with and without disabilities, an important part of becoming more independent is to move out of their parental home and into a place of their own, often sharing this space with others. It is critical to include planning for housing and community living goals in the transition planning process since many of the necessary skills for successful independent living (cooking, budgeting, menu planning, personal hygiene, etc.) can be incorporated into the IEP, as appropriate. There are a number of interrelated issues that also need to be considered, such as the availability of transportation, the location of post-secondary education or employment choices, access to the services and supports necessary to fully participate in community life, including medical, dental, and counseling services, shopping and recreation/fitness opportunities and the type of housing and neighborhood desired.

Should young people find a new place to call home?

Although there is funding available in Colorado through state agencies, parents need to realize that resources are limited and waiting lists are very long. Please contact your Community Centered Board, nearest Mental Health Center, or the Office of Supported Housing and Homeless Programs in the Colorado Department of Human Services. You can also contact your local Housing Authority. Each of these entities can be quickly found in the Colorado Project WIN Resource Guide on the Internet under training at www.uchsc.edu/projectwin. In addition to state agencies, it would be important for families to consider other options for housing. To begin this process, it would be helpful to have an understanding of where and with whom the student would like to live. Since each individual and family is unique, there is no blueprint or model for securing housing or the needed supports. Finding a place to live that is affordable and available can be challenging enough. Since the need for additional services and supports may make it seem almost impossible it is important to begin this process early.

"In the past, it was up to us to decide what to do with our daughter. When people would ask, what will you do, what will she do, I could never answer. In the last year or so, Jylle has been telling us what she wants to do. It has taken me to task, because in the past I didn't really think she had the right or the ability to make a choice. Well, she has made a choice. She would like to live in an apartment. She would like to choose with whom she lives. I think she has the right to do that." (Alaska parent)

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Planning for Living Independently

What Does This Student Need?	Actions the High School Transition Team May Recommend
ASSESSMENT that identifies strengths, needs, interests, preferences for adult and independent living, including recreation and leisure	✓ interview youth and family regarding adult and independent living interests and preferences (use other methods to assess interests and preferences if student is nonverbal) ✓ observe youth in independent living or recreational setting ✓ interview youth and family regarding medical needs ✓ interview youth and family regarding financial plans ✓ identify transportation skills and needs ✓ develop a list of supports student needs to be successful ✓ identify needed natural supports, accommodations, and support services
DEVELOPMENT of adult living placement options, including recreation and leisure (not needed immediately, but for planning purposes)	✓ analyze adult living options in the local area (for example, group homes, supported living homes, roommates) ✓ analyze locality for leisure/recreation options in the local area ✓ coordinate with other families and youth looking for adult living options ✓ provide training and education for families and youth regarding living and financial options for transition-aged youth ✓ analyze community for transportation options
MATCH youth to adult living placement options, including recreation and leisure	✓ analyze the demands and expectations of the adult living and community participation options ✓ match the student's assessment and list of supports to the demands and expectations of these options
TRAINING and PREPARATION for adult living	✓ provide instruction to prepare youth to enter identified adult living and community options. ✓ identify potential service providers for needed supports and accommodations ✓ develop natural supports ✓ provide opportunities to participate in the community in the identified settings
PLACEMENT and FOLLOW-ALONG	✓ monitor progress ✓ monitor changing need for natural supports ✓ monitor changing need for services ✓ make adjustments, as needed

If supported housing is needed and you are considering an existing residence, then there are a number of questions that you may want to ask:

Ask many questions about potential living arrangements:

- ***what***
- ***where***
- ***who***
- ***how***
- ***why***
- ***when***

- Who else lives there?
- What assistance/services will be available?
  - Will someone help you learn to budget your money and do banking activities?
  - Will someone help you learn the public transportation system?
  - Will you assist in cooking, cleaning the house, doing laundry?
  - How can you solve problems? Will there be someone you can talk to about problems you have?
  - What's available in your new neighborhood-recreation activities, parks, community organizations?
- What are the rules of the house?
- What is the house like (location, neighborhood, accessibility)?
- What about respect for your cultural, religious, ethnic values?
- Who are the people who work there/ What is the turnover rate for staff?
- What are the cost factors?

Resources for Financing Housing

The Federal Government has been a primary source of financial resources for the development of housing for people with disabilities. State and local housing agencies distribute funds, information, and technical assistance to assist low and moderate income tenants, which includes many people with disabilities.
Examples include:

- The Home Ownership Task Force, created in conjunction with the Department of Housing and Urban Development has a Home Ownership Resource Directory. 303-672-5216
- In many communities, Community Development Corporations (CDC) assist individuals in groups to plan, develop, and implement affordable housing strategies.
- State Housing Authorities work with people and communities to increase the supply and quality of affordable housing. Contact information for local housing authorities can be found in the Colorado Project WIN Resource Guide , on the Internet at www.uchsc.edu/projectwin.
- Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is a federal agency responsible for low income housing assistance. For example, this agency administers Section 8 Housing, Community Development Block Grant Programs, Section 202 loans and others. The State of Colorado Supported Housing and Homeless Programs administers a large number of Section 8 Housing Vouchers. The web address is www.cdhs.state.co.us.
- SSI or SSDI resources can be used to pay expenses, including food and rent.
- Food stamps, a Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service program, enables low-income recipients to exchange the stamps for food. For additional information on Food Stamp programs, please contact your county Department of Social/Human Services. The web address is www.cdhs.state.co.us.
- Home Share programs are designed to match home owners or renters who want to share living space. These programs exist in many communities. There are also Cooperative Housing ventures in many communities where people live in their own home, but share common dining and recreational facilities.
- Trusts are legal ways in which parents can put money or property towards the future benefit of their sons or daughters. Trusts can be used in a number of ways, but need to be carefully written so that people don't lose benefits as a result of the arrangement.
- The Colorado Project WIN Resource Guide is available on the Internet at www.uchsc.edu/projectwin and it contains application, contact and eligibility information for certain housing programs in Colorado, as well as, Housing Authority contact information.

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Transportation

Explore the options for getting where you want and need to be

Transportation is a critical issue for everyone. For students with disabilities who are interested and eligible to apply for a Colorado driver's license, accommodations can be made to take the written part of the test.

Other options can include ride sharing and the use of public transportation. Reduced fare passes for individuals with disabilities are available through many local public transportation providers. Specialized training to teach individuals how to safely ride public transportation can be made available from the school district if travel training is part of the IEP. (For adults, training on using public transportation is available from DVR, Mental Health (MH), or Developmental Disability Services (DDS).)

If a student is not able to use any of the above, the Easter Seals has a national state-by-state database on the Project Action database. For Colorado it currently has listings for about 25 Colorado Communities. The address is www.projectaction.org.

For those students who have Medicaid, transportation to medical, mental health, and other Medicaid related services can be arranged in advance by calling your local county Department of Human or Social Services. They can also tell you what services can be paid by Medicaid.

Mental Health and Counseling Services

Asking for help

Resources for mental health services and counseling:

- ***CMC's***
- ***MHASA's***
- ***Mental Health Clinics***
- ***NAMI***

The range of mental health services available to students with disabilities varies according to the needs of the individual student. The intensity of counseling services and the accompanying supports, including the use of psychotropic medication, are determined by the mental health and behavior-related issues that are present at any given time. Under the best of circumstances, students with and without disabilities, who are in the process of transitioning, or graduating, from high school are often at risk for developing increased anxiety and/or depression because of these developmental changes. Students with mental health issues, including behavioral challenges, often have the added struggle created by the difference between what is expected of them as adults (especially since their disability is for the most part "invisible") and what internal resources they actually have to deal with these challenges.

Mental health and counseling services can generally be found close to your local community while specialized services, such as continuing day treatment or treatment for individuals with dual diagnoses, may have a more central location. Once you have identified the services that you need for support either in college, or employment, or in your everyday life, or if you have questions about what support services might be available as an adult, call Colorado Department of Mental Health Services at 303-866-7400 or on the Internet at www.cdhs.state.co.us . The Colorado Project WIN Resource Guide contains a listing of local mental health services sites at www.uchsc.edu/projectwin.

There are many types of services available to those who experience emotional or behavioral difficulties so if you are not sure about what you need then you might want to explore one or any combination of the following:

Ask what kind of services are available

- mental health clinic or agency services which can include individual or group therapy, medication therapy, substance abuse counseling;
- continuing day treatment services;

- partial hospitalization;
- case management and other community support services;
- Intensive Case Management (ICM);
- Intensive Psychiatric Rehabilitation Treatment (IPRT) which has a rehabilitation focus on any one of several life domains;
- self-help support groups.

Note: In choosing a particular service or program, it would be helpful to speak with other consumers who have firsthand knowledge of the service, if that is possible. Many programs have a consumer advisory council that can provide you with this opportunity.

Starting early: What to do when students need counseling and/or medication during the school years

Although the above list of services is available to students over the age of eighteen, many of these services are also available to younger students through the children's mental health system. The Colorado Mental Health Services, your local Special Education Director, or your local county Social/Human Services Office can supply additional information on services available in your area. If the person is eligible for Medicaid and needs mental health services, please consult your local mental health provider for information on where to access services.

Crisis Services

There may be times when an individual is in crisis and needs immediate assistance. For those times, call the nearest hospital emergency room or community mental health center, mental health clinic, or MHASA (Mental Health Assessment and Service Agency). To locate one of these entities, please consult the Colorado Project WIN Resource Guide at www.uchsc.edu/projectwin or the Colorado Department of Human Services at www.cdhs.state.co.us. Psychiatric inpatient care is sometimes necessary and admission to the most appropriate hospital can be initiated by a community-based service provider, the crisis intervention team, or by a family member.

Mental health or counseling services and other supports are available as needed throughout a person's lifetime. Having a number of resources that you can call when the need arises is the key.

Health Care

Health Care:

- ***community resources for health and wellness***
- ***financial coverage***

When you think about healthcare, there are two major areas that should be considered: the health and wellness resources that are available to adolescents and adults with disabilities and the financial coverage for these services. This is also the period of time during which most students begin to think in terms of adult rather than pediatric health care providers. Knowing which physicians, dentists, therapists, and other health care professionals to choose to provide services is a highly individualized process.

Many students with disabilities qualify for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) at age eighteen, if not before, and they will also be enrolled in the Medical Assistance (Medicaid) Program. Some students may have other health insurance coverage as well, in which case Medicaid becomes the secondary payor. There are some significant issues related to choosing health care providers that depend on the type of health insurance a student or young adult has and there are limited choices for those who are not eligible for any coverage.

If you have private health insurance coverage, you will need to request a summary

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of the benefits package so that you know:

- What services are covered;
- Whether there are participating providers;
- Whether you can consult/see any physician you choose;
- What your financial responsibility is (co-pay or fee-for-service);
- For specialized care related to a specific disability or medical condition, you may ask about referrals to knowledgeable health care providers;
- What services are not covered by insurance

Things to consider about medical coverage

If you have Medicaid coverage, you may be asked to join a Medicaid managed care plan and you will need to know:

- Whether you are *required* to participate in Medicaid managed care;
- Who the physicians and other health care providers are who participate in each of the plans being offered;
- What the process is for obtaining specialized care related to your specific medical condition or disability, including emotional and behavioral issues;
- What is the co-pay, if any, for services, prescriptions, etc.;
- What are the limitations on services, if any;
- What services are not covered.

What happens when there is no coverage available?

Some students may have Medicare coverage if they are receiving a Social Security benefit other than SSI, and for information about benefits under Medicare, they should contact the Social Security Administration (SSA), at 800-772-1213.

For those students who have no health insurance coverage or who are under-insured (for example, they need more or different services than those for which their insurance pays) and who are not eligible for Medicaid, there are health care providers that receive public funding to provide services to individuals using a sliding scale based on ability to pay. For information about the Medically Indigent/Colorado Indigent Care Program, please check www.chcpf.state.co.us/cicp/cicpindex.html for information.

Finding the right match: When is it time to switch from a pediatrician to an internist or family practitioner?

Sometimes, finding the right match with a health care provider can be frustrating, especially if you are looking for someone who has some experience and expertise with your particular issues. One way to gather information is to talk with other students and families who have similar needs. Another is to talk with your current physician or therapist and ask for recommendations or a referral. This is a natural question to ask whenever you are making a transition, such as from pediatric to adult health care, if you are moving, or if your health care needs change significantly. You can also call the physicians listed as participating providers on your insurance or managed care plan and ask specific questions about the care you are seeking. It would be helpful to make a list of the questions you have or the information you want prior to talking with others and to keep notes on the answers you receive.

For the most part, there will be adult health care providers available in your community who can see you for preventive and some of the more typical problems that you may have. If there are special considerations that may impact on your care, it is

beneficial to let the physician, nurse, dentist, or therapist know this in advance. Specialized services for physical and emotional or behavioral care as well as for technology assistance can be found at various sites throughout the county.

In Colorado, those students who have no health insurance coverage and who are not eligible for Medicaid can receive health care services through one of several options. The Colorado Uninsurable Health Insurance Plan (CUHIP) provides coverage for adults who cannot obtain health insurance because of a preexisting condition, such as diabetes or a seizure disorder. Low income children ages 3-19 years may receive health care in school-based health centers; however, the centers are only in certain districts in the state, not at all schools or in all districts.

Other programs provide health care services on a sliding scale to people who lack insurance of any kind. Many of these programs will also help youth and adults to fill out the necessary paperwork to determine eligibility for Medicaid or CUHIP. The Colorado Indigent Care Program (CICP) provides financial assistance for hospital or clinic services for low-income uninsured Coloradans who are not eligible for Medicaid. Local Community Health Centers, who are members of the Colorado Community Health Network, provide health care to low-income Coloradans through a sliding fee scale. Community Health Centers, which include Migrant and Homeless health centers, also take Medicaid and Medicare but do not take private insurance.

Contact Information:

- CUHIP – 303-692-2920 or 800-359-1991, www.cuhip.com (Cover Colorado Program)
- School Based Health Care Programs – Call the CDPHE (Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment) at 303-692-2377 or your child's school, or www.casbhc.org.
- Colorado Indigent Care Program – Call 303-866-2580 or ask at the billing office of the health facility
- Colorado Community Health Network – Call 303-861-5165, or visit the web site of HCPF – Colorado Indigent Care provider Directory at www.chcpf.state.co.us/cicp/cicpdir.html
- Colorado Resource Guide for People with Disabilities, a joint publication of the Social Security Administration, Colorado Medicaid, and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS-formerly HCFA). This resource contains information on SSI, SSDI, Medicaid and Medicare. It is accessible on the Internet at www.medicare.gov/publications/bugs/pdf/colorado.pdf.

Phone numbers or contact information for finding a health care provider:

- For Medicaid clients looking to choose a physician or an HMO: HCPF's First Help line 800-283-3221
- Health Colorado (Enrollment Facilitator) 888-367-6557
- Also, contact the numbers above for the Colorado Indigent Care Program and the Colorado Community Health Network.

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An alphabet soup of funding sources for community living:

- ***SSI***
- ***SSDI***
- ***PASS***
- ***IRWE***
- ***DSS***
- ***TANF***
- ***HUD***

Financial Information

Since this is both a multifaceted issue and one where the information changes it is even more important for you to know what questions to ask.

Education

If the student is planning a post-secondary education experience, then it is the guidance counselor or social worker at the local school district level who will assist students and their families in obtaining information about available financial resources, including scholarships, tuition aid, bank loans, and DVR funding for those students who are eligible for special services.

Social Security

For information about Social Security, or to apply, call 800-772-1213, or visit their web site at www.ssa.gov.

Many students with disabilities will qualify for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) at age eighteen, if not before. Once eligible for SSI, students will automatically receive Medicaid as well. This is a "needs-based" program and there are three categories within SSI that affect the payment rates: living alone, living with others, and living with others/receiving support and maintenance.

The second disability program in Social Security is Social Security Disability Income (SSDI) and is based on an individual's work history or on the work history of an insured eligible worker (whether retired, disabled, or deceased) and the student is his or her unmarried dependent or disabled adult child. Individuals who receive SSDI become eligible for Medicare coverage after two years.

There are two ways to exclude income under Social Security for students or adults who work and receive benefits: the Plan for Achieving Self-Support (PASS) and Impairment-Related Work Expenses (IRWEs), such as attendant care services, medical or prosthetic devices, drugs and medical services, and transportation costs. There are anticipated federal policy changes such as the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999, which may create additional opportunities. Call Social Security to request more specific information about these exclusions or changes. On the Colorado Project WIN web site www.uchsc.edu/projectwin (click on training in the left hand navigation) you can find a Resource Guide from the Social Security Administration, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid, and the Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Finance that provides information about SSI, SSDI, Medicaid and Medicare. (See page 43 for additional information.)

Employment

Most students will be employed either competitively or in supported work and will receive wages. Others will work under greater supervision in more sheltered environments or will volunteer time in the community in which case they may or may not receive compensation for their efforts. Wages must be considered in the overall financial picture since some people will be able to support themselves independently while others will need support services to do so and yet others will work with support services but will not be financially

independent. As students with disabilities move from school to adult life, the Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) is one of the primary resources for initial support services.

Remember that wages can affect any needs-based benefit, including SSI, Medicaid, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and food stamps.

Department of Social Services (DSS/DHS)

Your local county department of Social Services has a number of needs-based services that provide financial assistance and other services to individuals and families who meet the eligibility criteria. It is important to call the department directly for current information about available services such as temporary assistance, Medicaid, food stamps, and emergency housing. For general information, call your local office. You can also check the Colorado Project WIN Resource Guide on the Internet at www.uchsc.edu/projectwin for additional information on DSS/DHS programs, including a listing of county offices.

Housing

For those who need assistance with housing, there are housing subsidies which are managed by the county's Planning Department. In particular, Housing and Urban Development (HUD), known as Section 8, is a federally funded rental assistance program. For information about this and other housing issues, call the Supported Housing and Homeless Programs Office at 303-866-7350.

Medicaid Waiver

Medicaid has a Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Waiver. For information on any waivers Colorado may have for HCBS and the services provided, please contact the Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Finance at 800-221-3943.

Financial planning for the future

Trusts

There are a number of different types of trusts that may be established to benefit a person with disabilities and it is especially important to understand the differences among them so that the government benefits for which your son/daughter is eligible, such as SSI and Medicaid, are not jeopardized.

- Testamentary trusts are trusts that are established in the parents' will(s) and take effect upon their death.
- Supplemental Needs Trusts (SNTs) are trusts that take effect during the parents' lifetime and are generally used to supplement government benefits. An SNT is an irrevocable, public-private partnership that can provide such things as extra education, training, recreation, vacations, habilitation, treatment, and luxury items not typically paid for by Medicaid. There are several types of SNTs, such as:
    - Third-Party trusts which are funded with money from someone other than the person with disabilities, their spouse, or someone not legally responsible for the expenses of their care.
    - OBRA '93 (Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act) payback trusts which are funded using the beneficiary's (the person with a

What will happen when parents are no longer here?

disability) own assets. These assets may include proceeds obtained by the person with a disability by a court, inheritance, life insurance, or through a settlement of a malpractice or personal injury case.

- OBRA '93 pooled trusts which can only be established and managed by a not-for-profit organization with the assets of the person with a disability. Upon his or her death, the assets can remain in the pooled trust to benefit others with similar needs. The entity in Colorado that acts as trustee is the Colorado Fund for People With Disabilities, Inc.

  Contact: Michael Parks, Executive Director
  303-733-2867 phone
  303-733-2862 fax
  One Broadway, Suite A-330
  Denver, CO 80203

- A free guide to Legal Rights of the catastrophically ill and injured: A Family Guide, Second Edition by Joseph L. Romano. 800-331-4734, http://www.josephromanolaw.com/. While written specifically to address access to benefits following catastrophic illness or injury from health plans, this free guide does include extensive general information about issues of guardianship.

- The Guardianship Alliance may be able to provide referral to a professional who can help you with wills and trusts. Contact them at 303-423-2898.

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Section 6

CONTACTING AGENCIES AND COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Unless otherwise indicated, all parent and consumer quotes are from
Forging a New Era 1990 Reports on People with Developmental Disabilities,
By Jaskulski, T., Metzler, C., and Zierman, S., May 1990
Published by National Association of Developmental Disabilities Council,
1234 Massachusetts Ave NW, Suite 103, Washington, DC 20005

SECTION 6: CONTACTING AGENCIES AND COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Now that you have a plan, how do you find the resources?

- ***School***
- ***Other parents***
- ***Central resources***

Once the student and his or her transition team have identified the particular components of the plan and the transition services that are necessary to support the student in meeting goals, the next step is to find the resources. Unlike school services which are mandated by federal law, adult services often require some detective work on the part of the transition team members. Knowing a wide range of possible resources is the key to creating a collaborative transition plan with supports that are truly tailored to the individual's needs.

Your school district should have information on those transition services that are typically used by students with a variety of disabilities. It can be especially helpful for the team members to talk with other parents who have already gone through the transition process with their son or daughter. It is important that transition teams also look beyond the familiar agencies and traditional services when exploring supports. Team members are encouraged to think creatively in order to help each young adult live as productively, independently, and happily as possible. Supports and services should reflect the individual student's needs.

It's like detective work!

The Colorado Department of Education has a variety of transition related materials available. Visit the CDE website at www.cde.state.co.us and look for Special Services or call 303-866-6694.

- ***Transition Coordination***
  - Transition coordination is implemented at the local school district level. Check with your child's special-education case manager or district transition coordinator for information.
- ***ILC***
  - Independent Living Centers provide an array of services related to the transition planning process. Contact the ILC in your area. For a complete listing please consult the Colorado Project WIN Resource Guide for information at www.uchsc.edu/projectwin, or call the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation at 720-884-1234.
- ***Employment Services***
  - Workforce Centers offer numerous services including work registration, job referrals, career guidance and counseling, job data banks, interviewing and networking skills, resume writing, and assessment. The Centers work closely with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) to obtain more intensive services that may be needed by clients with disabilities. Find the nearest Workforce Center in your local phone book or visit their web site at www.employwvcs.cdle.state.co.us/WFCs.html.

    The Colorado DVR assists individuals who have a physical or mental disability to enter, re-enter, or maintain employment and increase skills for living independently. DVR counselors can be helpful in linking clients with other agencies for support services that will enhance their ability to work. At this time, DVR does not have a wait list. The appropriate time to refer is when the student's focus shifts from education to employment and the student is available for services, usually during the last year of school. To find the nearest Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) office, refer to your local phone book, call the State DVR office at 720-884-1234, or visit their website at www.cdhs.state.co.us/ods/dvr/index.html or check the Colorado Project WIN Resource Guide at www.uchsc.edu/projectwin.
- ***MH Services***
  - Your local Community Mental Health Center provides information about publicly funded services for individuals with mental health issues,

developmental disabilities, and dual diagnoses and is responsible for the overall planning for services in the county. Please contact your local office of Mental Health Services for information.

- ***DD Services***
  - The Colorado Developmental Disabilities Services (DDS) and the Community Centered Board System (CCB) is responsible for services for people who have a developmental disability. Colorado Development Disabilities Services contracts with private not-for-profit agencies in local communities who are designated as Community Centered Boards (CCB). Each of the CCBs throughout Colorado has a designated geographical service area and offers a range of services including employment, residential, and community participation. Waiting lists for services can be very long. It is important for parents to add their child's name to the wait list at the age of 14 even if they are unsure about the types of services their child may need as an adult. Contact your local CCB or call DDS at 303-762-4550 to identify the center nearest to you. CCB contact information can also be found in the Colorado Project WIN Resource Guide at www.uchsc.edu/projectwin.

- ***Post-secondary Education***
  - Disability services providers at each area vocational school, community college, four-year college and university assist students with disabilities to select courses and obtain the supports necessary to succeed in the post-secondary education setting. Students must contact the Office of Disability Services at the college and provide documentation of disability in order to receive accommodations and/or services. For further information, contact your high school guidance counselor, special education teacher, or the post-secondary school you are interested in. Most schools now have web pages with basic information. *Colorado Options: Handbook of Post-Secondary Education Services for Students with Disabilities* is available on the CDE website at www.cde.state.co.us under Transition Resources.

- ***Parent Support***
  - PEAK Parent Center is the nationally recognized center in Colorado for parent information and training. PEAK offers training on topics relevant to parents of children with disabilities, one-on-one technical assistance by phone, numerous publications, and a bi-monthly newsletter. Contact them by calling 719-531-9400 or 800-284-0251.

- ***Telephone Book***

In addition to the agencies and services listed above, the white, blue, and yellow pages of the local phone book can be a good tool for discovering transition resources. In the white pages, the table of contents includes references such as Community Service Numbers and Services for People with Disabilities. Local, state, and federal government listings can be found in the blue-edged Government Pages of the phone book. At the beginning the Government Blue Pages is an Easy Reference List of Government offices, arranged by function. Local city, town, and government offices are arranged alphabetically by community name and include listings on employment, recreation, and youth services. County resources are listed by function, such as Disabled-Information and Referral, Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, Health, Housing, Parks and Recreation, Social Services, and Transportation. The Colorado State and U.S. Government Offices listings are also alphabetical by department name, such as Education, Labor, Housing, Mental Health, Disabilities and Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Speech Disabled, and Social Security. In the yellow pages, you can use key words such as Social and Human Services to locate agencies and services that are both generic and disability-related.

- ***Web sites***

Modern technology can certainly enhance planning. Increasingly, agencies and organizations use web sites and e-mail to find and share information. If families do not have access to the Internet through a home or personal computer, then both students

- ***E-mail***

and their family members are encouraged to utilize computer technology through the school district or through the local library. There are resource people available at both locations who can assist you in your search for information. Some of the terms listed in the above paragraph may also be useful in keyword searches on the World Wide Web.

Part of transition planning involves collecting information from the community about programs and other services that can be used both for immediate and for anticipated needs.

> *"Every agency seems to have a different definition. I can't keep them all straight." (Oklahoma parent)*
>
> *"You have to almost know the answer to ask the right question." (Texas parent)*

Sometimes making a "cold" contact to get information can be intimidating. In *Transition Planning: A Team Effort*, a NICHCY publication, there is a ***Transition Services Phone Interview Guide*** that will give you some helpful ideas on how to gather information. This will give you some helpful ideas on how to gather information. It can be adapted for your use in a telephone interview or in person. (A copy is on page 53.)

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Transition Services Phone Interview Guide

When you are starting your cold calling search for service providers, start with agencies that can refer you to other organizations, such as Vocational Rehabilitation or an Independent Living Center.

Name of Organization _____

Name of Person You Spoke with _____

Position _____

Address _____

Phone Number _____ *Fax Number* _____ Date Contacted _____

Sample phone script:

"Hello, This is _____ . I am a (teacher, parent, family member, administrator, coordinator) of a youth (young adult) who is" (OR, if you are the student, then "I am")_____ (exploring career options, exploring where to live after graduation, interested in a recreational program, or whatever fits your ultimate goals). I am looking for information to help in planning for my (own, son's, daughter's, family member's, student's) future. I found your organization through _____ (another agency, the yellow pages, a publication) and I am interested in learning more about what services you provide (or what your organization does). Could you tell me who in your organization I should talk to about this? Thank you.

Please tell me about your agency/organization. Who do you serve? What services do you offer?

_____

_____

How does one get involved with your agency/organization? Are there special eligibility or admission requirements? How does one apply?

_____

_____

Are there costs involved in participating in your agency's or organization's programs? If so, how much are they? Do you offer special rates?

_____

_____

Do you have any ideas about how your agency or organization might help meet a need such as: (Describe a "specific problem or need" that you might have, for example: youth has a visual disability and needs assistance changing buses; youth has physical disability and is interested in playing a sport; teen parent with a learning disability needs child care so that she can go to work after school; and so forth.)

_____

_____

Could you refer me to some other people agencies, or organizations that might offer some services to meet this need?

_____

_____

Do you have any written materials describing your agency (or organization)? If so, could you please send them to me _____ (your name) at _____ (your address).

Thank you for speaking with me today. This information is very helpful in planning my (own, student's, son's, daughter's) future as a member of our community. Best wishes for fulfilling your agency's (or organization's) mission.

Networking

If you find that the person with whom you are speaking is not able to offer you the information or the service that you are looking for, ask whether they may be able to refer you to someone or someplace that might have this information. This is a good way to begin to establish a network, especially if you have requests or needs that are related to a particular disability, to cultural or religious considerations, to language spoken, to method of communication used, or to technology and accessibility requirements.

Ask about commonly used terms for accessing services:

- ***SLS (Supported Living Services)***
- ***SE (Supported Employment)***

Finding the appropriate resource person or people who will help gather information can be done by trial and error or more often by talking with others who have been through this process, including school personnel, transition coordinators, and other students and families. Certain agencies and community resources will seem more accessible or more helpful at different times during this process. Since this is a multi-year endeavor, various services or supports may be available at different times.

At some point you will also need a way in which to evaluate the information that you gather and this can be done by observing the programs or services directly, by talking with those who are participating in them currently, and by asking others in the school or community. The role of a service coordinator (case manager) in adult services is to help identify benefits (funding sources) and services that are available and meet the individual's needs. Reaching for the non-traditional services and resources remains a major challenge for most people. We are so accustomed to having limited expectations for individuals with disabilities that it is difficult to look beyond what has traditionally been available and to risk trying to create something new. Individualized planning can help all team members focus on the student and begin to value whatever degree of participation he or she has in this process.

Ask if there are other types of services and supports

There is little doubt that you will encounter barriers along the way or that something in your plan will change. It is at these points that you need to call upon the members of your team and strategize what your next steps need to be. **Remember, this is teamwork.** Often the primary problem that teams experience is related to communication-either a lack of it or some miscommunication-and that is why staying in touch with the other team members on a regular basis is so important. This networking takes time and effort, especially on the part of the individuals who have agreed to take responsibility for scheduling meetings of follow-up contacts. Since such networking is really a lifelong process for many individuals, learn to share the responsibility with both formal and natural supports. For those of us who have done and are doing this, we can honestly say, "It's worth it!"

Think creatively and keep in touch with each other!

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Section 7

TAKING THE NEXT STEPS

SECTION 7: TAKING THE NEXT STEPS

A road map for life

The information included in this guidebook was designed for families as a road map through transition planning from school to adult life. Transition planning is by nature an active rather than a static process. In the years between age fourteen and age twenty-one or younger, when your son or daughter exits from the school system, ideas about transition planning for his or her future may take different direction with each new school year. During this period of time, discovering personal preferences, interests, gifts, and talents may strengthen your son or daughter's motivation to achieve desired goals and dreams.

Also keep in mind that changes will occur during the entire life span from youth through aging. New experiences and opportunities will create new challenges. Families whose children with disabilities have already graduated from high school, are constantly reminded that, although we had specific plans in place for our children when they completed school, life often takes many unexpected twists and turns. As new issues arise requiring choice and decision-making, we hope that your experiences and practice with transition planning now will smooth the way for additional planning in the years to come.

One Student's Journey Through Transition

The following excerpt from public testimony by a high school graduate who received special education services, explores his journey through transition planning in his own words. It traces the details of his life planning activities between the ages of fourteen and twenty-four. This account illustrates some practical ideas in key areas of transition planning and offers some real-life examples that blend programs and services with natural supports through community networks.

WRITTEN TESTIMONY PRESENTED BY MITCHELL LEVITZ FOR THE UNITED STATES SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND HUMAN RESOURCES ON MAY 11, 1995 HEARINGS ON THE REAUTHORIZATION OF THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT

Thank you for this opportunity to present my personal views on IDEA. My name is Mitchell Levitz. I am twenty-four years old and live in Westchester County in New York State. I am a 1991 graduate of Walter Panas High School in the Lakeland Central School District. I will be sharing with you some thoughts about the special education services that I received throughout my school years and how that helped me get to where I am today.

The outcome of special education should be having students become active, contributing members of our communities, and lead independent and productive lives.

Currently, the way we are measuring the success of our educational programs is on how well they are preparing students to be ready for post-secondary education or employment. The outcome of special education should be having students become active, contributing members of our communities, and lead independent and productive lives. I have been very fortunate because my education did prepare me for the employment and civic work I do today as a young adult.

My parents' active role in advocating for what they believed I needed and working together with the school district, opened doors that had previously been closed to students like me with disabilities.

Learning experiences should be life long.

Learning experiences should be life long. We can all benefit from continuing education. However, because special education services under

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IDEA are only available until age twenty-one, much more work needs to be done to develop additional opportunities. We continue to learn, as long as we are exposed to life experiences and opportunities that promote learning.

It is very important that we have people in our lives that we can depend upon, not to do things for us, but rather to help us to do things for ourselves.

All through school, I was very determined and motivated to work hard and keep up with the other students. I have been very fortunate to have a network of people who support and encourage me, and people that I feel comfortable turning to for help and guidance. For those of us who sometimes require a little or a lot of extra help, it is very important that we have people in our lives that we can depend upon, not to do things for us, but rather to help us to do things for ourselves.

In thinking about how my school experience helped me prepare for the future, I know that speech and language services helped me speak more clearly, so that people can understand me better. Attending my IEP meetings, helped me learn to listen, speak up for myself, work with others, determine my preferences, make choices, explore options, and plan for my future.

Attending my IEP meetings, helped me learn to listen, speak up for myself, work with others, determine my preferences, make choices, explore options, and plan for my future.

I've learned from personal experience, that it makes sense for students to begin early having experiences with jobs, so that they can prepare for careers in today's society. I gained job skills from volunteer work experiences and paid employment. I learned the responsibilities of having jobs such as being on time, following instructions, working independently, being flexible, getting along with co-workers, and being able to earn and save money.

It was very valuable to try different kinds of jobs, so that I could find out what kinds of things I like doing, and what things I don't enjoy doing.

It was very valuable to try different kinds of jobs, so that I could find out what kinds of things I like doing, and what things I don't enjoy doing. This helped me develop some clear ideas about planning for my future career. Work opportunities give you a chance to prove how well you can do something you've never done before. At first it may be very difficult, but once you get started, people can give you help and support such as job coaching.

When I turned fourteen, I got working papers from school. I worked as a busboy in my family business. The managers hired other students from my school, so it gave me a chance to have some relationships with these students outside of school, because we worked together on the job. I also had an in-school work experience, during all four years of high school, assisting the Dean of Students, who handled the discipline problems. So, besides learning office skills, I learned about rules and regulations, and accepting the consequences for our actions.

In addition, I did volunteer work in the community by interning for my local Assemblyman George Pataki, who is now the Governor of New York State. This was important for me because I found out that I liked office work, politics, government, and public service.

It is helpful when parents, educators, and the community work together, using whatever resources they have, to help students prepare for their future.

It was my parent's idea for me to have work experiences, and they helped me and the school make some of the contacts and arrangements. I feel that all students, especially those who need more time and practice trying out different experiences, should have these kinds of opportunities as part of a school transition program. It is helpful when parents, educators, and the community work together, using whatever resources they have, to help students prepare for their future. I am glad that transition planning has been included in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

We have to think beyond just education and consider all areas of life experiences...

When we do transition planning, *we have to think beyond just education and consider all areas of life experiences*. This kind of planning is very important for students getting ready for what will happen after high school. The areas that need to be considered are: continuing education, employment, community participation, living arrangements, budgeting and managing money, religious or spiritual activities, having fun and leisure time, social life, personal hygiene and keeping fit, building support systems including guardianship and legal arrangements, and health and medical care. What is most important is that planning includes setting goals that are based upon each student's personal dreams.

What is most important is that planning includes setting goals that are based upon each student's personal dreams.

Transition planning makes good sense. I tried it out and it worked for me! However, at the time I was in school, there was no formal transition planning or meetings to develop an individualized transition plan. But, I, and my parents, and my special education guidance counselor, had many informal meetings. We regularly discussed my activities both in and out of school, my courses, interests, goals and dreams. And, we always kept in mind, my determination to be fully independent someday. Often, these meetings included other people, depending upon what we were planning to discuss.

These are some steps that we took in preparing for my future after high school. We made decisions about what kinds of courses for me to take. For example, I wanted to stay in an academic program so that I could learn more general information and also get a regular diploma. We explored a tech center for half days, but I wasn't interested in the few programs that were available for me such as food service or being a health assistant.

After attending a career day, I wrote letters to get information about the field of law. We all decided that business courses would be practical and enjoyable. And, as it turned out, some of my most useful courses in high school were Consumer Math, English, American History, Politics, Economics, Introduction to Occupations, and my business courses. I started talking about going to college, just like what my sisters were talking about doing. So, I attended a college fair and began visiting post-secondary programs for students with learning disabilities. By the time I was a senior, we had narrowed down my options. I decided that I was more interested in getting the skills to live and work independently than going on to college and taking more classes like math and science. I wanted to get a job, wear a jacket and tie to work, and carry a briefcase!

During this same period during high school, my parents were also doing some things to help me prepare for the future. They helped me with travel training and managing a bank account. I joined a social and travel program for teens and young adults with disabilities, so that I would make friends, go places, have fun, and be more independent. My parents were letting me make more decisions for myself, and go places and do things on my own, without someone in the family tagging along. I also had particular jobs at home that I was responsible for, such as shoveling snow, taking out the garbage, emptying the dishwasher, and folding clothes.

After high school, I lived in a transitional apartment and learned to cook, clean, do laundry, shop, and budget my money. Some people in this program were also part of the social club that I belonged to. So, just like my sisters who went away to college, I had a chance to be away from home, learn to be more independent, and then return as an adult.

Now I am living on my own, by myself, in a small house nearby my parents. Where someone lives is the key to just how independent we can really be. For example, I don't drive, so I have to use public transportation. But, I live in walking distance to a bus route, so I am able to get to and from work, and also go to a mall, completely on my own. I can also walk to a nearby shopping center for the barber, cleaners, pharmacy, and the supermarket. Our synagogue, the bank, my doctor, and the hospital are also in walking distance. This means that I am less dependent on my parents and other people for my everyday activities.

People with disabilities are talented and accomplished in many diverse ways.

In my free time, I enjoy water skiing, downhill skiing, tennis, ping-pong and traveling. I am also a big sports fan. Everyday, I read the newspaper and watch the news so that I know what is going on in the world. Perhaps we all have more in common with one another than you might have expected. People with disabilities are talented and accomplished in many diverse ways.

When I was in the post-secondary transitional program, I worked part time as a bulk teller at a bank, and took the train to work. I also worked part time at Pizza Hut doing food preparation and dishwashing. I found out quickly that I definitely don't enjoy working in fast food restaurants.

After I finished the transition program and moved back to our hometown, I worked as an office assistant at the Peekskill/Cortlandt Chamber of Commerce. This position was a pilot project partly funded through a federal On-the Job Training Program. I learned to use the computer, FAX machine, and copier. I did filing, prepared mailings, and answered the phones. I gave directions and information to walk-in customers. I liked walking to the bank, post office, city hall, and to other businesses, because I would meet other people who lived and worked in our town. As part of this model program, we developed a survey to find out from businesses if they would hire a person with a disability. We received many favorable responses. This led to a contract agreement between the Chamber of Commerce and the New York State Education Department. I am proud that this model is now being used statewide and is helping other people with disabilities get jobs.

Everyone can make a difference and should try to have their voices heard...

This past year, I have had a paid internship position with the Westchester ARC as a Coordinator of Consumer Empowerment. My job involves community education, legislative advocacy, and quality of life issues for people with mental retardation and other disabilities. I facilitate a self-advocacy group and work closely with the New York State Self-Advocacy Association.

In a few months, I will begin a new full time position working for a national disability organization, and I will be moving to another part of the country. Because of my excellent education and job training, I feel confident and ready to handle both this career move and a new level independent living.

People need to recognize that we are all an important part of our communities. I believe that everyone can make a difference and should try to have their voices heard, by participating and contributing in someway, to make our communities a better place for everyone. So, you can see why I think that students should be encouraged and guided in how to get involved in activities at school or in the community during the years they are still students in school. This can lead to opportunities for them in their future.

Being an advocate means speaking out for ourselves and for others on issues that effect us and our families. The very first step in advocacy is

Students need to learn how to share information and express their ideas through discussions and meetings.

Being independent means having responsibilities and taking these responsibilities seriously. Just like everyone else, people with disabilities need to have choices about where we live and work, whom we live with, and how we spend our leisure time. And, just because we may not be able to make all of our own decisions without some help, is not a reason for us to be excluded from making any decisions at all.

learning to be a self advocate-speaking out for ourselves. It is very important for children and young adults to learn how to advocate for ourselves by being asked to make choices and decisions about our lives. In school, students need to learn how to share information and express their ideas through discussions and meetings. I believe that decision-making and advocacy skills should be part of every student's education and teachers need to be trained to teach their students about self-determination, understanding their rights and responsibilities, and how to speak up for themselves.

Talking about having a disability may be difficult. But, we need to express ourselves instead of keeping it inside, so that more people will understand how we feel, and know about the problems, obstacles, and challenges we face. But at the same time, we also need people to focus on our abilities, not our disabilities. People should think of us first as individuals and second, that we happen to have some special challenges.

We should listen to our own hearts, and also to the advice of parents and dedicated professionals because they understand our concerns and can help us find strategies to solve our own problems. But parents and professionals must also not be over protective. They should give us time and space for some privacy, and ourselves and encourage us to take risks by trying out new things. For example, having all kinds of relationships, setting realistic goals, and handling our own affairs.

Being independent means having responsibilities and taking these responsibilities seriously. Then we can prove to parents, professionals, and ourselves that we can be as independent as possible. The message to remember is that, just like everyone else, people with disabilities need to have choices about where we live and work, whom we live with, and how we spend our leisure time. And, just because we may not be able to make all of our own decisions without some help, is not a reason for us to be excluded from making any decisions at all.

I believe that there can be many opportunities to succeed in life, but only if we take advantage of these opportunities. And, where opportunities do not exist, we must work together to see that opportunities are created. With high expectations and positive thinking, and with the love of our families and the support of our communities, each of us can reach our potential and achieve our dreams. Each of us is important in our own way.

The Journey Continues

Mitchell moved to Cincinnati, Ohio, in September 1995 after being recruited for a position as Self-Advocacy Coordinator for a newly forming non-profit organization. Capabilities Unlimited, Inc. promotes leadership opportunities and community partnerships for people with and without disabilities through volunteering, training, employment, collaborative ventures, and the development of skills to voice one's beliefs. Mitchell serves as the Editor-in-Chief of *Community Advocacy Press*, a free quarterly newsletter written by and for people with developmental disabilities (800-871-2181). He lives in an apartment by himself in a suburb of Cincinnati that has a town center with shopping, restaurants and other community services. He works at an office not far from where he lives.

Many issues and concerns emerged because of Mitchell's decision to move far away from his family. Some of these issues have been resolved and others still remain as challenges. The chart on the following page gives a few examples of life planning areas along with potential strategies and solutions.

We encourage you to keep this guidebook handy and revisit the information and strategies provided to assist your family in life planning in the future years.

Life Planning – Strategies and Solutions

Issue/Goal #1:	Participating in community organizations
Challenge/obstacle:	Transportation
Strategy/solution:	Gaining a commitment from the organization that a member will pick him up and take him home. Accessing travel training on the bus system from the metro transportation system staff

Issue/Goal #2:	Good health
Challenge/obstacle:	Keeping dishes and silverware clean and sanitized without having a dishwasher in the apartment
Strategy/solution:	Arranging for supportive living services to periodically check on the cleanliness of the apartment

Issue/Goal #3:	Attending religious services and observing holidays
Challenge/obstacle:	Making connections in the community
Strategy/solution:	Using the employer's personal networks to establish a relationship with a host family

Issue/Goal #4:	Loneliness and isolation – "all work and no play"
Challenge/obstacle:	Making friends and having fun and activities after work
Strategy/solution:	Getting connected with an organization such as Best Buddies and Natural Ties where local college students are matched with young people with disabilities for individual and group social activities

Section 8

GLOSSARY AND APPENDIX

ADA/AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (1990)
The civil rights act for persons with disabilities.

ADD AND ADHD
Attention Deficit Disorder and Attention Deficit-Hyperactivity Disorder

ADDICTION
Physical or psychological dependence on a substance, with lack of the substance causing withdrawal symptoms.

ADL/ACTIVITIES OF DAILY LIVING
Basic skills such as housekeeping, meal planning and preparation, money management, arranging social activities, use of public transportation, and self-medication.

ADVOCACY
Speaking for or urging a cause, such as equal access to community services.

AMA
Against Medical Advice

AGING OUT
Term applying to a student who is nearing the end of his/her school career due to age rather than completion of graduation requirements. In Colorado, students typically age out at the end of the semester in which they turn 21.

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY DEVICE
Any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities.

BOCES/BOARD OF COOPERATIVE EDUCATION SERVICES
A co-funded regional educational service unit designed to provide instructional, administrative, facility support, or other services contracted by participating members.

BUCKLEY AMENDMENT
Otherwise known as the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), this federal law gives students 18 years old and the parents of students under 18 years old the right to see, correct, and control access to student records.

CAREER ASSESSMENT
See Vocational Assessment

CAREGIVER
One who looks after or spends time caring for someone who is unable to be independent.

CASE MANAGER
The individual responsible for planning, locating, coordinating, and reviewing all aspects of needed services, supports and resources in cooperation with a person with a disability and their family.

CBI: COMMUNITY BASED INSTRUCTION
Integrating students into their community as part of their education.

CMHC
Community Mental Health Center

COMMUNITY-BASED
Services provided in a non-institutional site, preferably in the individual's home community.

COMMUNITY RESIDENCE
A facility in the community where room, board, and clinical supervision is provided in a homelike environment. One example is a group home.

COMPETITIVE EMPLOYMENT
See Employment.

COUNSELING
Advice or guidance provided by a trained, licensed professional such as a psychiatrist, psychologist, or a social worker.

CRISIS INTERVENTION
Assisting individuals or their families in emergency situations, for example, housing, medical, and/or psychiatric needs.

DAY TREATMENT
A planned combination of broad diagnostic, treatment, and rehabilitative services provided during daytime hours while the person with a mental illness lives at home or in a community residence.

DDS: DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY SERVICES
A program located within the Colorado Department of Human Services.

DETOXIFICATION
The process of restoring physiological functioning after it has been seriously disturbed by alcohol, drugs, or other addictive substances.

DHS: DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
This department provides a wide array of services for people who are economically and socially disadvantaged.

DIAGNOSIS (PRIMARY)
The name of the major condition (physical, developmental, or mental) for which a person is being treated.

DIAGNOSIS (SECONDARY)
The name(s) of an additional or secondary condition (physical, developmental, or mental) for which a person is being treated. These will be conditions that are a consequence of the primary condition.

DSS: DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
This department provides a wide array of services for people who are economically and socially disadvantaged.

DUAL DIAGNOSIS
A term referring to individuals having diagnoses in two (or more) of the following: mental illness, mental retardation or developmental disabilities, or substance abuse.

DYSFUNCTION
The inability or impaired ability of a body part or system to function as expected.

EDUCATIONAL SURROGATE PARENT
Someone appointed to represent a child at special education meetings when the parents of the child are not known and/or cannot be located, or if parental rights for that child have been terminated. School districts are required under IDEA regulations to assure such representation occurs.

ED
Emotional Disturbance/Emotionally Disabled. See Emotional Disturbance.

EH
Educationally Handicapped

EMOTIONALLY DISABLED
Unable to function in a variety of settings due to significant social/emotional or behavioral challenges. See SIED

EMOTIONAL DISTURBANCE
A term that refers to students who have difficulties in school that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors.

EMPLOYMENT (COMPETITIVE)
A job in the community in which the hiring, salary, job description, and evaluation are handled equally for all employees.

ER
Emergency Room

ESP
Educational Surrogate Parent

FAMILY DIRECTED PLANNING
A planning process in which the student and the student's family are the team leaders.

FUNCTIONAL ASSESSMENT
A process to assess a person's capacity to perform life functions. See Functional Disability

FUNCTIONAL BEHAVIORAL ASSESSMENT
A process for gathering broad and specific information about a student's behavior in order to identify the function or purpose that the behavior serves.

FUNCTIONAL DISABILITY
A reduction in capacity to perform in mobility, motor skills, self-care, self-direction, interpersonal skills, communication, work tolerance and work skills.

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GENETIC
Related to causes determined to be inherited.

GROUP HOME
See Community Residence.

GUARDIANSHIP
A court proceeding that grants full or partial decision-making for an adult with a significant cognitive disability to a third party (e.g., parent is granted decision-making power over an adult child's finances, medical decisions, etc.).

HALFWAY HOUSE
A supervised community residence or group home for individuals recovering from mental illness, drug related abuse, etc. after they have been discharged from the hospital and before they are able to live independently.

HMO
Health Maintenance Organization

HOME-BASED CARE
Care provided in the home in which an individual usually lives.

HOUSING AND SHELTER ALLOWANCES
Cash grants or vouchers to help people provide for housing needs.

I and R
Information and Referral

IDEA: INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT
Reauthorization of PL 94-142. These are the federal regulations which govern special education, the IEP, and transition services.

IEP: INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM
A written plan designed to help a child with disabilities achieve specific educational goals. It will identify the disability; describe the child's strengths and areas of need; list goals that the child should reach in a year's time; include short-term instructional objectives which represent a series of skills to be mastered or major accomplishments to be gained that will lead toward reaching the annual goals; and, identify the types of programs and services, including regular education, that the child will receive. A new IEP is developed each year. From age 14 on, the IEP will also address transition needs and services.

IEP TEAM
A multi-disciplinary team, including the student and parents, that coordinates evaluations and recommends special education programs and services for students with disabilities.

INCOME MAINTENANCE PROGRAM
Financial assistance in the form of cash grants to allow eligible low income families basic income and medical, food, and support services.

IN-HOME RESPITE/RESPITE CARE
Services provided in the home of a disabled individual to relieve the usual caregiver (parent, spouse, sibling, etc.) of the care of the individual for a period of time.

INDEPENDENT LIVING
Living in a house or apartment alone or with others, but not with family members or professional staff.

ILC: INDEPENDENT LIVING CENTER
Community based programs that provide assistance to persons with disabilities to ensure full participation in community life.

INVISIBLE DISABILITY
A disability with no visible or obvious physical manifestation. A visible disability could include a missing limb or Down's syndrome. An invisible disability could include schizophrenia or dyslexia.

IPE: INDIVIDUALIZED PLAN FOR EMPLOYMENT
A training plan written by a Vocational Rehabilitation counselor that leads to employment.

JOB COACH
A person who provides assistance to an individual with a disability to learn or maintain a job. This can include training and support at the job site. See Supported Employment.

JOB TRAINING
Program that prepares people for specific employment opportunities.

LD
Learning Disability. See Learning Disabled.

LEARNING DISABLED
A processing disorder that causes students to have a problem listening, thinking, speaking, reading, writing, or doing arithmetic.

LCSW
Licensed Certified Social Worker

LRE: LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT
A work, school, or living situation that allows individuals as much freedom of choice and independence as possible without endangering their health, physical safety, or ability to learn.

LEISURE-TIME SKILLS
Generally refers to skills such as developing hobbies, making choices about what recreational or social activities to attend, deciding how to spend free time, and putting the ideas into action.

MHASA (Mental Health Assessment and Services Agencies)
The newest component of Colorado's public mental health service system. At present, there are nine MHASA's responsible for implementing Medicaid mental health capitation and case management programs through contracts with MHS. They serve all of Colorado's 63 counties. Each MHASA is responsible for managing the delivery of mental health services to Medicaid-eligible individuals in its assigned service area.

MEDICAID
A Federal program of monetary assistance for people who cannot afford to pay for medical care and who qualify based upon income. Transportation and medical services are some of the activities that can be funded by Medicaid. Each state develops its own policies and procedures for Medicaid eligibility or disability status.

MEDICARE
A federal health insurance program mainly for persons aged 65 or older, with some limited benefits for younger persons who have been eligible for Social Security disability benefits for more than two years.

MENTAL ILLNESS
A general term denoting disorders that affect feelings, thoughts, or behavior characterized by distressing symptoms or impaired functioning over a period of time.

MENTAL RETARDATION
Below average intellectual functioning resulting in impaired learning, social adjustment, and maturation.

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY TEAM
A group of professional and non-professional staff, such as teachers, aides, nurses, social workers, doctors, speech therapists, physical therapists, etc. This team usually includes family members and the student/consumer in the planning and decision making process.

MULTIPLE DISABILITY
Having two or more areas of significant impairment, one of which is cognitive, except in the case of deaf-blindness (e.g., cerebral palsy and cognitive delay, hearing impaired and cognitive delay).

NETWORKING
Sharing information or services among individuals, groups, or agencies.

NEUROLOGY
The field of medicine that deals with the nervous system and its disorders.

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY
Planned activity for persons with disabilities to help them gain greater independence in living and work environments and prevent further disabilities.

OBRA: 1993
The Federal Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1993 that addresses the creation of supplemental needs trusts.

OD
Overdose

OJT
On-the-Job Training

OT
See Occupational Therapy.

OUTPATIENT
A patient, not hospitalized, who is being treated in an office, clinic, or other health care facility.

PASS PLAN: PLAN FOR ACHIEVING SELF SUPPORT
A work incentive for individuals who receive SSI that allows the individuals to set aside income for achieving a specific life goal in a specified period of time. This set aside income is *not* included when determining overall assets. As a result, a consumer is not punished with reduced benefits for working.

PEDIATRIC
Concerning the branch of medicine that deals with the care of infants and children and the treatment of their diseases.

PEER COUNSELING
A type of guidance in which persons of the same age, disability, or other similar interest are trained to help or guide others.

PL 94-142: PUBLIC LAW 94-142
Federal law signed in 1975 which mandates that students with disabilities have a right to a free and appropriate public education, instruction in the least restrictive environment, with equal access and due process. Re-authorized as IDEA.

PRE-VOCATIONAL
A term referring to activities designed to prepare an individual for a job and teach job-related behaviors.

PRIMARY CAREGIVER
The person who spends the most time in caring for someone who is unable to be independent.

PROGNOSIS
Prediction of the course of a disease or disability.

PSYCHOLOGICAL EVALUATION
An assessment of performance and capabilities which uses psychological tests to guide the establishment of appropriate interventions.

PSYCHO-SOCIAL EVALUATION
An assessment of an individual's thoughts, emotions, and interactions with people.

RECIPIENT
Consumer of medical/health services.

RECREATIONAL THERAPY
A structured plan to develop a healthy body and mind through fun and relaxation.

REFERRAL
Sending a client to another source or provider to get advice or treatment.

REHABILITATION
The Process of regaining lost functions and skills.

REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973
The federal act that makes provisions for training, equipment, and other services that people with disabilities may need in order to work and live independently in their communities.

RESIDENTIAL CARE/TREATMENT
Programs providing therapeutic living environments in community-based facilities such as community residences.

RESPITE
(See also In-Home Respite Care) Time away from the responsibilities of caring for someone who cannot care for him/herself.

SCHOOL TO WORK OPPORTUNITIES ACT
The federal act that provides funding for systemic change that includes work-based, school-based, and connecting activities to create quality opportunities for all students.

SCREEN
To test for signs of a disorder that might require further investigation.

SECTION 504 (Sec. 504)
The anti-discrimination section of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 which affects all programs receiving federal funding.

SELF-ADVOCACY
The process of obtaining needed services for oneself.

SELF-DETERMINATION
A process in which the individual's preferences, interests, abilities, and wishes are the focus of planning and implementing activities.

SELF-HELP
Assisting oneself. Refers also to groups who meet to help one another.

SERVICE COORDINATOR
An advocate chosen by the consumer to assist in accessing health and social service systems and to assure that all required services are obtained.

SIED: SIGNIFICANT IDENTIFIABLE EMOTIONAL DISABILITY
A student with a SIED displays emotional or social functioning that prevents the student from receiving reasonable benefit from general education.

SLIDING SCALE FEE
Amount of money charged for professional services based on the client's ability to pay.

SOCIAL SECURITY
Federal government income plan payable to retired workers, survivors, and individuals with disabilities who qualify. See SSI, SSDI.

SPECIAL EDUCATION
Specially designed instruction, at no cost to parents, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability, including instruction conducted in the classroom, in the home, in hospitals and institutions, and in other settings.

in hospitals and institutions, and in other settings.

SSI: SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME
Provides monthly income to people who are age 65 or older, or are blind or disabled, and have limited income and financial resources.

SSDI: SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY INCOME
Pays benefits to disabled workers and their families. To be eligible for SSDI, you must be disabled and must have earned a minimum number of credits from work covered under Social Security. (The required number of credits varies depending on your age at the time you became disabled.)

SUPPORT GROUPS
Groups of people with similar needs and concerns who meet together to support each other and share information.

SUPPORTED APARTMENT
An apartment where a person with a disability gets help in order to live as independently as possible.

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT
A program for persons with substantial disabilities designed to assist integration into a competitive employment. This program is not time limited and may include advocacy.

SWAP: SCHOOL TO WORK ALLIANCE PROGRAM
The School to Work Alliance Program is a collaborative initiative between the Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) and local school districts, which is supported by the Colorado Department of Education.

TANF: TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES
Government grants to families with children under 18, or in-school children under 21 in financial need. Changed to TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) in federal law in 1996.

THERAPEUTIC RECREATION
See Recreational Therapy.

TRANSITION PLAN
A coordinated set of activities for a student that is part of the IEP and is designed to promote movement from school to post-school activities, including post-secondary education, vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation. Transition planning should become a part of the IEP process for students beginning at age fourteen.

TRIENNIAL REVIEW
A complete review of a student's special education eligibility status conducted every three years by the IEP team.

VOCATIONAL ASSESSMENT
The systematic collection of information about a student's vocational aptitudes, abilities, expressed interests, and occupational awareness used in planning a transition to competitive employment or post-secondary education.

WAIS-R: WECHSLER ADULT INTELLIGENCE SCALE-REVISED
A test of mental ability for those over age sixteen.

WISC III: WECHSLER INTELLIGENCE SCALE FOR CHILDREN (3RD Edition)
A test of mental ability for children six to sixteen years of age.

APPENDIX

Person-Centered Planning Worksheet

Date: _____

Dreams: What are your hopes and dreams for the future? Student: _____

Student	Parent

Fears: What will stand in the way of what you want?

Student	Parent

Abilities: What are your strengths, gifts, talents, likes, dislikes and skills?

Student	Parent

Needs: What is needed to make your dreams come true? What leads to success? What helps you do a good job?

Student	Parent

Contact Form

1. Identify the areas of living where extra support is required.

2. Identify who will provide that support (agency/person).

3. Identify who the contact person is at that agency and their phone number. Who is the person to contact if there is a problem or questions about the support?

Area	Agency/Person	Contact Person	Phone

Other important persons:

Name	Phone	What they can help with

When was this form updated? _____

Transition Checklist

The following is a checklist of transition activities that students, parents, and school personnel may wish to consider when preparing transition plans with the IEP team. The student's skills and interests will determine which items on the checklist are relevant. Use this checklist to determine whether or not these transition issues should be addressed at IEP transition meetings. The checklist can also help identify who should be part of the IEP transition team. Responsibility for carrying out the specific transition activities should be determined at the IEP transition meetings.

Four to Five Years Before Leaving School

- ❑ Identify student learning styles and the necessary accommodations to be a successful learner and worker.
- ❑ Identify career interests and skills, complete interest and career inventories, and identify additional education or training requirements.
- ❑ Explore options for post-secondary education and training including admission criteria.
- ❑ Identify interests and options for future living arrangements, including supports.
- ❑ Learn to communicate effectively student interests, preferences, and needs.
- ❑ Be able to explain student disabilities and the accommodations he or she needs.
- ❑ Learn and practice informed decision-making skills.
- ❑ Investigate assistive technology tools that can increase community involvement and employment opportunities.
- ❑ Broaden student experiences with community activities and expand friendships.
- ❑ Pursue and use local transportation options *outside of family.*
- ❑ Acquire an identification card and the ability to communicate personal information.
- ❑ Identify and begin learning skills necessary for independent living including money management.
- ❑ Learn and practice personal health care.

Two to Three Years Before Leaving School

- ❑ Identify community support services and programs (Vocational Rehabilitation, Centers for Independent Living, Community Centered Board, etc.)
- ❑ Coordinate with adult service providers and ensure that appropriate referrals have been made.
- ❑ Match career interests and skills with academic course work and community work experiences.
- ❑ Gather more information on post-secondary programs and the support services offered; and make arrangements for accommodations to take college entrance exams.
- ❑ Identify health care providers and become informed about sexuality and family planning issues.
- ❑ Determine the need for financial support (Supplemental Security Income, state financial supplemental programs, Medicare).
- ❑ Learn and practice appropriate interpersonal, communication, and social skills for different settings (employment, school, recreation, with peers, etc.).
- ❑ Explore legal status about decision-making prior to the age of maturity and consider the need for guardianship.
- ❑ Begin a resume and update it as needed.
- ❑ Practice independent living skills, e.g., budgeting, shopping, cooking, and housekeeping.
- ❑ Identify needed personal assistant services, and if appropriate, learn to direct and manage these services.

One Year Before Leaving School

- ❑ Apply for financial support programs. (Supplemental Security Income, Independent Living Services, Vocational Rehabilitation, and Personal Assistant Services).
- ❑ Identify the post-secondary school the student plans to attend and arrange for accommodations.
- ❑ Practice effective communication by developing interview skills, asking for help, and identifying necessary accommodations at post-secondary and work environments.
- ❑ Specify desired job and obtain paid employment with supports as needed.
- ❑ Take responsibility for arriving on time to work, appointments, and social activities including transportation needs.
- ❑ Assume responsibility for health care needs (making appointments, filling and taking prescriptions etc.).
- ❑ Register to vote and for selective service (if a male).

Checklist adapted by the Colorado Department of Education from the National Transition Network Checklist

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